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ABSTRACT

This inventory, is based on the database derived from Assessment Strategies in Scottish Higher Education (ASSHE) project, a survey of information about changing assessment practices in all 22 Scottish higher educational institutions. Its aims are to spotlight the diversity of assessment strategies and practices, identify core themes and directions, and offer a representative selection of assessment initiatives found in Scottish higher education. Respondents were asked to focus specifically on changes in what was being assessed; in when and where assessment was taking place; and in who was involved in evaluating and assessing students' work. Each of the 124 representative responses follows a common format noting: where the assessment initiative was introduced; the title and a summary of the initiative; the starting date and the impact of the initiative in terms of scale (course or degree program) and its wider adoption; and an estimate of the number of students affected, a current contact address, and a reference number. Responses are grouped into eight sections: "General"; "Assessing Presentation Skills"; "Assessing Group- and Teamwork"; "Assessing Other Skills"; "Using Computing and Information Technology in Assessment"; "Involving Students and Others in Assessment"; "Test and Examinations"; and "Coursework Assessment." (BF)

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ED 461 319

Edited by
Dai Hounsell,
Mary McCulloch and
Mary Scott

CHANGING ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN SCOTTISH HIGHER EDUCATION

INVENTORY

HE 030 665

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The AHIE Inventory

The ASSHE (Assessment Strategies in Scottish Higher Education) Project was carried out under the auspices of the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals and with the generous financial support of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. The project was undertaken jointly by colleagues from The University of Edinburgh and Napier University, Edinburgh.

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The ASSHE Inventory

Changing Assessment Practices in Scottish Higher Education

Dai Hounsell, Mary McCulloch, Mary Scott
and the ASSHE Project Team

Published by the

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Introduction and Background

INTRODUCTION

This *Inventory* offers a representative selection of entries drawn from the ASSHE database, which documents recent changes in assessment strategies across Scottish higher education.

More specifically, the aims of the *Inventory* are to :

- spotlight the rich diversity of ways in which assessment strategies and practices have been evolving across Scotland's universities, colleges and institutes of higher education
- identify the main or 'core' themes which characterise the nature and direction of the changes underway
- offer a wide selection of summaries of assessment initiatives which are broadly representative of the range of subjects, levels of study and types of institution to be found in Scottish higher education
- indicate the different kinds of issues which arise in relation to specific core themes and how these have been tackled.

The ASSHE Inventory will therefore be of great interest to university and college teachers, administrators, managers and educational researchers – in Scotland and elsewhere – concerned in some way or other with how students are assessed in contemporary higher education.

BACKGROUND

The ASSHE Project

ASSHE (Assessment Strategies in Scottish Higher Education) is a two-year survey and dissemination project which has been jointly undertaken by colleagues from the University of Edinburgh and Napier University, Edinburgh. The project, which began its work in September 1994, was carried out under the auspices of the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP) and with the aid of a substantial grant from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC).

The rationale for the project can be summarised as follows. Higher education in Britain in the mid-1990s has been undergoing changes in many different aspects of established pedagogical practice – in course design, in teaching-learning methods, and perhaps most strikingly of all, in approaches to assessment. The reasons for these changes are varied and complex, but include the rapid growth of student numbers in the early 1990s combined with diminishing resources, greater public accountability for quality (secured chiefly through the introduction of quality audit and quality assessment of teaching), an intensified concern with the development of students' personal transferable skills, and the impact of advances in computing and information technology.

Assessment practices offer a particularly fruitful vantage-point from which to view the impact and evolution of such changes, since they inevitably reflect and incorporate developments in course design and teaching-learning methods as well as in assessment itself. Moreover, in a period when change is widespread and diverse but resources are constrained, it becomes especially

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important not only to identify the myriad ways in which practices are actually changing, across subjects and across institutions, but also to pinpoint factors which seem to work for or against particular changes, and to ensure that the resulting information is widely disseminated. Individuals, departments and institutions alike are then much better-placed to learn from one another's experiences and insights and to avoid the wasteful duplication of continually reinventing wheels.

THE SURVEY STRATEGY

Against this background, the ASSHE Project sought to survey, document, analyse and disseminate information about changing assessment practices in all twenty-two higher education institutions in Scotland – the 21 SHEFC-funded institutions together with the Open University in Scotland. (The schedule for the survey is shown in Figure 1.) With the assistance of Principals, a link-person was identified for each institution, and members of the ASSHE project team liaised with each link-person to agree an optimal strategy for surveying teaching and senior administrative staff in the institution concerned. While the approach adopted to surveying staff therefore varied from one institution to another, the end-result was that all relevant staff were directly circulated either with a copy of the ASSHE survey pro forma together with a descriptive leaflet, or simply with the leaflet. The latter included a reply postcard enabling anyone to obtain a copy of the survey pro forma and/or to ask for their name to be added to the project's mailing list and thus to be kept in touch with further information about the project as its work proceeded.

Briefing Information

An important function of the leaflet was to indicate the kinds of changes in assessment practices which the project sought to identify and document. Prospective respondents were therefore advised that :

> *We are particularly concerned with changes and developments in student assessment which are designed to meet current and*

THE SURVEY SCHEDULE

Spring 1995 Edinburgh College of Art Heriot-Watt University Napier University The University of Edinburgh	**Autumn 1995** Glasgow Caledonian University Glasgow School of Art Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama Scottish College of Textiles St Andrew's College of Education Strathclyde University The University of Glasgow University of Paisley
Summer 1995 Moray House Institute of Education Northern College of Education Queen Margaret College The Open University University of St Andrews University of Dundee University of Stirling	**Winter 1995/96** The Robert Gordon University University of Aberdeen University of Abertay Dundee

Figure 1

emerging challenges and opportunities. These changes may be large-scale or small-scale initiatives. They may span one or more degree programmes, or be confined to a single course unit or module. However, we are just as interested in efforts to modify existing practices as in more outright innovation.

It was also suggested that these changes were likely to take a wide variety of forms :

- **changes in *what* is being assessed** *e.g.*
  - evaluating students' skills in problem-solving, critical reasoning or creative thinking, or their capacity to draw together ideas and concepts from different subject areas
  - assessing skills in groupwork, in leading a team or in managing a project
  - assessing information-handling and research skills, or computer/IT literacy
  - evaluating students' ability to convey information or ideas succinctly to a lay audience
- **changes in *how* students are assessed** *e.g.*
  - via oral presentations, projects and dissertations, contributions in tutorials or practicals, vivas or oral exams, computer-based tests
  - through changes in the relative weightings of coursework, tests and examinations
  - by trying out different ways of giving students feedback, or by commenting on drafts or working notes
  - through modifications in grading or marking schemes, or in the criteria applied in arriving at a mark or grade
  - through changes in the way marks are recorded, cross-checked, collated or monitored
- **changes in *when* and *where* assessment is taking place** *e.g.*
  - evaluating students' background knowledge prior to the start of a course, or taking early measures to identify at-risk students
  - testing or examining students as and when each module is completed (rather than by final examinations, say)
  - setting shorter, or fewer (or fewer-but-more-demanding) assignments
  - assessing students in the workplace, in the community, or on placement
- **changes in *who* is involved in evaluating and assessing students' work** *e.g.*
  - the student submitting the work concerned, or other students in the same class
  - postgraduate tutors or teaching assistants
  - employers, professional practitioners or project partners.

The Survey Pro Forma

The survey pro forma itself was in three parts. Part I sought background information on the assessment initiative concerned and the staff most directly involved; Part II asked respondents for a summary of 150-300 words describing the initiative; and Part III invited respondents to reflect on factors influencing the implementation of the initiative and the responses of students and course colleagues. It was also made clear to those completing the pro forma that while the information given in Parts I and II of the pro forma would be entered

into the ASSHE database (and thus widely accessible in due course), confidentiality would be maintained for information given in Part III, the findings of which would only be made publicly available in aggregated form.

By the conclusion of the survey phase of the project in early summer 1996, over 300 completed pro formas had been returned for inclusion in the database. The completed pro formas were drawn from all 22 institutions surveyed and from across the full spectrum of disciplines and subject areas. Pro formas were subject to editing and consultation, where appropriate, with those who had provided them, in the interests of clarity and of consistency of treatment. They were systematically indexed by subject and topic, the latter a particularly demanding undertaking since (not surprisingly) no agreed terminology exists to encompass the myriad facets of recent changes in assessment.

THE INVENTORY

A little over one-third of the database entries were subsequently selected for inclusion in the present *Inventory*, with the main criterion adopted being to achieve representativeness in terms of topic or aspect of assessment involved, discipline or subject area, level of course, and type and range of institution. The process of selection was nonetheless extremely difficult, and it should not be assumed that entries appearing in the database but not in the *Inventory* are in consequence any less interesting or noteworthy.

The entries as they appear in the *Inventory* are slightly shortened versions of their database counterparts, in the interests of compactness of presentation. The entries in the *Inventory* are also arranged under clusters of core themes:

- initiatives concerned with the assessment of presentation skills (i.e. the skills of presenting information orally and visually rather than in the more conventional written form), of group and teamwork, and of other personal and transferable skills
- initiatives entailing the application of computing and information technology to one or more aspects of assessment practice
- initiatives in which students or individuals other than mainstream teaching staff (e.g. clinical tutors, librarians, employers or members of the community) have been involved directly or indirectly in evaluating or commenting on the quality of assessed work
- initiatives which represent significant changes in the conduct of tests and examinations or in coursework (sometimes called in-course or more misleadingly, continuous) assessment.

These are preceded by a 'general' section which covers initiatives not falling within the above themes whilst at the same time underscoring the diversity of ways in which assessment practices have been changing. Please note nonetheless that though the entries are grouped by theme, many of them are relevant to more than one of the core themes, and the topic index can therefore be used to locate all of the entries in the *Inventory* which relate in some way or other to a given topic or facet of assessment, while the subject index can be used to track down all of the initiatives described which refer to a particular discipline or subject area.

The Format of the Entries

Each entry in the *Inventory* follows a common format. This records :

- the department/school/faculty and institution where the assessment initiative was

introduced

- the title of the initiative
- a summary of the initiative
- the date when the initiative was first introduced
- the impact of the initiative, in terms of :-
  - the scale on which the initiative was introduced (e.g. across a course or degree programme)
  - (where relevant) its wider adoption subsequently (e.g. by the department or institution concerned)
- an estimate of the number of students affected by the initiative
- a current contact address for the individual concerned
- the reference number for the initiative as it appears in the ASSHE database from which the *Inventory* entries are drawn

The Nature of the Entries

For clarity's sake, some observations are necessary about the nature of the entries in the *Inventory*. First, all the entries represent data which is in essence 'self-reported', at a given point in time and for the most part in relation to a specific course unit, module or programme of study. The information was provided by those directly concerned with the initiative described, and therefore represents their own conceptions of what they were engaged in and what the consequences were. It would have been invidious as well as impractical to have in some way established an 'independent' check on the information provided, which in any case was offered in the knowledge that it would in due course enter the public domain. But doubtless all of those who kindly provided information would wish to point out that neither the initiatives themselves, nor their views of them, are as it were frozen in time, and may well continue to evolve in a number of possible ways.

Second, no assumption is made that any and every entry constitute to some degree or other what is often called 'good practice' or 'best practice'. Despite the prevalence of these terms in contemporary higher education, both, it should be emphasised, are highly problematic. What is 'good' (let alone 'best') practice is not simply a matter of considered professional judgement, or even attainable in some instances through consensus. 'Good' practice is not an absolute, but closely bound up with a complex constellation of factors which include the needs and circumstances of any particular discipline, the distinctive aims and processes of given courses or programmes of study, the characteristics of the students involved, and the particular mission and aspirations of the university or college concerned.

What can however be said with confidence is that each initiative represents one or more aspects of *changing practices* in assessment as perceived by those most directly concerned. Of course, change itself (in common with similar terms such as development and innovation) is also relative: what may be in some sense 'new' or 'fresh' or 'innovative' in one context may well be regarded as routine or established elsewhere, just as notions of what might be 'radical' or 'traditional' will vary widely. Indeed, anyone who consults the *Inventory* will have their own distinctive conceptualisation of what might represent a more or less significant change, just as they are likely to have ideas about what, in a given course or departmental setting with which they are professionally concerned, might call for reappraisal and a changed approach and what might happily be left unaltered.

Neither change nor innovation, we should therefore emphasise, is

inherently a good or even necessary thing, just as certain aspects of assessment practices are no more or less admirable whether they are dubbed traditional or innovative. Nonetheless, the fact that the ASSHE project has been able to gather over 300 examples of changes in assessment practices (and that these range over a wide array of concerns and issues) bears witness to the scope and scale of the reappraisal of practices which is currently underway in higher education, while also indicating what gave impetus to the various changes in approach. And it follows that anyone interested in changing assessment practices will find it worthwhile to consult and peruse the material collected in the *Inventory*, whether their prime concern is to gauge overall patterns and trends, to look at the different ways in which other colleagues have responded to challenges similar to those which they themselves confront, or to consider what might be entailed if they were to change their current practices in a particular direction.

BEYOND THE INVENTORY

Significant though the *Inventory* is, it should be pointed out that it also forms part of a wider dissemination strategy for the ASSHE Project. The wider strategy includes a variety of contributions by members of the project team to national and international conferences, workshops and seminars, and a handbook (for publication in mid-1997) which will discuss and reflect on the ASSHE findings in detail. If you would like to be kept informed about these and other developments, simply contact the ASSHE Office at the address shown on the opening pages of the *Inventory* and ask for your name to be added to the project's mailing list.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, the members of the ASSHE project team would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those who made the production of the *Inventory* possible including Mark Blackadder, for the cover design; Jenny Hounsell, for designing the entry layout and format; and Bob McCulloch, Pauline Clark and Lynne Glen for their help in reformatting the original database material. Our particular thanks must also go to all those who gave generously of their time and effort to provide material for the database; to our network of institutional link-persons, for the encouragement and support they gave to their colleagues; to Dr Cecilia Moyo, now Director of the South African Association for Academic Development, who undertook a great deal of the preliminary bibliographic work on the project; to our External Adviser, Dr. George Brown, who was unstinting in contributing his wisdom and wealth of expertise in many telling ways; to the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals, and particularly its Secretary, Dr. Ronald Crawford, and the Chairman of the COSHEP Steering Committee for the Project, Professor Alistair MacFarlane; and to the Scottish Higher Education Council, without whose generous financial support the ASSHE Project could not have been undertaken.

General

Replacement of a Formal Examination by Other Forms of Assessment

Clinical Biochemistry teaching is a small component of 3rd MBChB consisting of about 24 one-hour teaching sessions. In the assessment approach used until recently students were required to answer one question in a formal three-hour pathology examination. There was concern, however, that this examination did not assess the core knowledge or problem-solving ability that the student was expected to acquire. Three assessments of individual students were therefore devised to replace the formal examination.

An extended essay: in-depth investigation of one of more than 20 essay topics. Essays are graded and discussed with students. A failure requires the student to repeat the essay, but a satisfactory response only receives grade D.

A problem-solving case study: the student is given a patient case presentation and associated biochemical data. The differential diagnosis of the case is presented and discussed with an assessor, then graded. The assessor is given a standardised answer to the case question. A student recording a failure is allowed to repeat with another case, but a satisfactory response only receives grade D, on resubmission.

Viva questions: a selection of more than 100 questions divided into eight core topics e.g. renal, endocrinology, liver, etc. is used for the assessment. The student is asked to answer ten questions, at least one from each subdivision. A score of correct answers out of ten determines the grade. A score of at least 9 is required to obtain grade B. If grade B is achieved a further five questions are asked and a further four correct will then allow upgrade to A. A score of 5 or less is a fail. If students fail this assessment they are allowed to repeat with a different assessor, but can only attain grade D, if a satisfactory performance is recorded.

The overall assessment in Clinical Biochemistry averages grades from each category of assessment, which are equally-weighted. A triple A-grade recognises a merit award and merit awardees are given a viva by our external examiner to determine distinction awards.

Start date: Summer 1990

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 140

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Database entry ref: 114

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Approaches to Assessment in a First-Year Engineering Module

The department has been concerned over the high failure rate amongst first year students and desired an early indication of students at risk so that remedial work could be undertaken. It was also considered that students lacked a clear appreciation of engineering as distinct from maths and science and would benefit from closer contact with a member of staff who could impart an engineering ethos. We wished in addition to improve the verbal communication and report-writing skills of the students.

The scheme adopted for first year modules in electrical engineering consists of four elements attempting to address the concerns noted above

- *Weekly small group tutorials* - Tutors are asked to report weekly on each session (of six or less students with one staff member), during which students are asked to present solutions to set problems and discussion is encouraged
- *Weekly check on lab performance* - Lab supervisors interview each group of two at every lab session and attempt to assess understanding of principles involved and the standard of the log-book.
- *A mock report writing exercise* - This exercise aims to improve skill in processing results and writing conclusions before the major project report is attempted.
- *Half and full-term tests* - The module outcome is assessed on the basis of (60%) written tests at half- and full-term: (24%) lab performance and (16%) project report.

The scheme is now in its second year and is generally well received by students and staff. Although any comparison with previous years should be treated with caution because of the move to a modular scheme, the raw figures suggest an increase in the pass rate from 78% to 93% in the subjects concerned.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 80

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Database entry ref: 60

Department of Molecular and Life Sciences *University of Abertay Dundee*

Hierarchical Learning Objectives in Assessing Part-Time Mature Nursing Students

This initiative was introduced to try and improve the learning atmosphere, and hence pass rate, within the Human Physiology topic of a part-time Nursing degree. The students, who were typically mature (>25 years), held physiology in poor standing, found it difficult and failed to see its relevance to their profession. A needs assessment exercise in which several nurses were questioned pinpointed those areas of physiology that were of relevance to their profession and enabled large sections of superfluous syllabus to be removed. A number of performance objectives were constructed in a hierarchical format. Lower level objectives, which were taught first, were prerequisite to higher level objectives.

Students are given the complete list of objectives at the start of the teaching and kept fully informed on their achievement of each one. Objectives are carefully phased with the performance expected, its degree/level, and the conditions under which it is to be achieved. There are no other forms of assessment. Even at the first year level of the course, students successfully analyse case studies as part of their highest level objectives and constructively defend stated opinions about the case studies. Their initial reservations about a "new" type of assessment tend to dissolve into support for a method of learning which they find useful and interesting.

Currently, for a module of 45-50 hours class contact, there are typically fifteen objectives, the three topmost ones being compulsory. Students must achieve 80% of the objectives to pass a module. Pass rates are approximately 90-95% compared to about 60% previously.

Start date: Autumn 1986

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Database entry ref: 131

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Streamlining Assessment to Improve Quality

The changes outlined here have been part of a long-term streamlining in assessment across all geography courses. Many of the changes, involving fewer, more relevant assessments, were first introduced for honours modules and then moved down through the years to affect all cohorts. Overall, the changes have been accepted by staff and students and there has been a marked increase in quality of student output.

One major change was to convert all examination questions from 30/40-minute to hour-long essays. There were thus fewer questions, but it was not possible to get away with only recall. The immediate response was that the quality of answers improved and that students did more reading. The number of essays has also been reduced throughout all courses, with each essay requiring more work on the part of the student, and contributing more to the final grade. Class examinations have been removed from most courses and the number of exemptions given to first year students has increased. Pass/fail examinations are being used to a larger extent, and more are planned.

Project work has also increased and now accounts for up to 45% of the course grade. There is prior discussion between staff and students as to what makes a good project, followed up with input in tutorials, and several options now incorporate oral assessment and are peer assessed, with the half of the grade being awarded by the students. In feedback, some of the discussions revolve around why peer and tutor marks differ.

The department is encouraging the submission of all work in a word-processed format, though concerns have been voiced about the increasingly poor writing styles on exam scripts. The dissertation deadline has been changed to later in the degree programme, and the greater experience gained from options and the like has resulted in higher quality dissertations, which have been winning national prizes.

Start date: Autumn 1987

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: c.400

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Database entry ref: 258

Development of Student-Centred Assessment Activity Profiles

Assessing individual activity within the restraints of a project-rich learning environment, particularly in a situation where one individual's "talent" can produce an overall result matched (in conventional assessment terms) by the "application" of another, it is important to deal with each student's abilities in his or her own terms, and not through absolute, or group ranking examination methodologies. This is all the more vital when dealing with what has been commonly seen as "subjective" decision-making related to creative or synthetic performance/activity. Secondly, while not diminishing any healthy cohort competition, this format has the added advantage of creating a student-centred evaluation regime in which the individual can receive accurate evaluations which show a profile of individual performance measured against the needs of the particular activity completed.

This has been applied throughout the specific specialisation culture within a degree programme. While using common (degree-wide) overall activity examination headings, the initiative involves devising further deliverable criteria or specific performances within these headings. At the conclusion of each project activity students and staff exchange performance assessment.

From a student perspective this has increased the feeling of "individuality", made assessments much more transparent, decreased intrusive "pass/fail" anxiety and promoted self-motivated learning. From a staff perspective, the developing educational culture is more confident, informal without being lax, conducive to the high demands made on the individual engaged in any creative activity.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 150

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Database entry ref: 172

Assessment and Feedback for Larger Classes

The initiative involves two aspects, practical course reports and the examination of a large cohort of undergraduate students.

With nearly 550 students submitting reports at fortnightly intervals, the marking has to be distributed among many markers. This year the marking is being done by teaching assistants and postgraduates based on guidance notes for each practical prepared by the course co-ordinator. The innovation is that the reports are then passed to the members of staff responsible for the various practical groups (each group has about 45 students) who assign the final marks based on the recommended marks from the original markers, but modifiable if they consider the original marks are not appropriate. In addition, the students are supplied with feedback comments on each practical via the Internet a few days after they have submitted their reports.

The essay section of the examination has been eliminated, not for any pedagogic reasons but to save on the vast marking effort required of staff in a limited period when examination essays from other levels are also being marked. The machine-readable answer sheets from a multiple-choice exam are processed and a correction for guessing is made.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 550

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Database entry ref: 217

Reform of the Three Year Degree

The three-year BSc degree is being completely reformed on the basis of a modular course structure. Modules will generally be smaller (10-40 credits) than the current year-long courses (40-60 credits). Greater emphasis will be placed on continuous assessment and less on the traditional end-of-course examinations. Each student who completes a course will receive a grade (A-G). The primary measure of the student's progress will be the grade-point-average (GPA) rather than counting courses passed. Thus the BSc qualification will be 360 credits at a GPA of D or better (with minimum proportions of modules in Science subjects and at level 2 or above).

The three-year degrees of MA and MA (Soc.Sc.) are being reformed on the same basis. The Faculty of Engineering already has a modular course structure, but has agreed to bring its regulations into line and to introduce a three-year degree. It is expected that the remaining non-clinical Faculties will also bring their regulations into line.

In addition to the degree itself, the reform will also introduce sub-degree qualifications for students unable or unwilling to progress to the degree: Certificate (120 credits) and Diploma (240 credits), each with a specified minimum GPA.

Start date: Autumn 1996

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☐ across a degree
- ☑ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: c.3,000

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Database entry ref: 277

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Modelling Teaching and Assessment for the Independent Learner

The new competency-based teacher training guidelines, together with concurrent modularisation, allowed us to offer a new elective module to BEd III/IV students entitled "Promoting Diversity". While constrained to the course requirement for end-of-module grades for each student, the ethos of the module, its presentation and assessment strategies were developed to model collaborative approaches by teachers to meet learners' needs in increasingly pluralist schools.

Through dialogue and negotiation the module staff and students agreed on an oral presentation at the end of Year III. The same collaborative process led to a practical outcome for the final year IV, the production of an open learning pack based on information-handling and independent research.

The Year III assessment was the first time these students underwent an oral assessment. Tutoring sessions led to the refinement of the actual task and how it related to the module criteria. Guidance was given on how to use overheads and support materials within a strict time schedule. A positive group ethos was developed throughout the module so that with their agreement everyone was to participate in the assessment procedure, albeit using a printed proforma sheet covering the criteria. The group split into three self-selected subgroups for the actual assessment session, each one chaired by a tutor. The presentations were uniformly outstanding. Those who were absent were asked to submit their overheads with a supporting written statement.

The Year IV task was based on the retrieval and collation of information from a variety of sources in an area of their own choice. The end product was an open learning information pack for use in their working lives, to be continued and upgraded for themselves and future colleagues.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 35

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Database entry ref: 230

Professional and Social Aspects of Computing

The aims of the module Professional and Social Aspects of Computing (PSAC) are:

- to enable students to gain a broad general knowledge of some current research areas in computer science and their application in industry and commerce, and the non-technical factors which may affect decision making in these areas
- to make students aware of the social implications and ethical problems which may face the users and builders of computer systems
- to develop skills in collecting and communicating information, managing and leading debate and drawing conclusions on these issues.

Students are expected to attend a briefing meeting and technical writing seminar, and write an essay of 4,000-5,000 words which is marked on: content (40%), argument (20%), style (20%), writing (10%), and a bonus for exceptional quality (10%). Students have to attend weekly seminars by speakers from industry and academia, and write 1-2 page reports on five of these in each of the first two terms. Students are also required to attend and participate in PSAC seminars. Students split into groups of 3/4 and choose a topic. During the first term each group has to organise a presentation and lead a debate. These are marked as follows: content (50%), presentation (30%) debate (20%). Another requirement is attendance at an intensive two-day course and the submission of a 1,500-2,000 word report.

The overall marking scheme for the module is: Essay (20%), 10 Seminar reports (50%),Presentation: Group mark (15%) and Report on Easter Course (15%). Where a group mark is assigned, all members of the group will get the same mark unless all members of the group request otherwise.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 15

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Database entry ref: 110

Assessment of Weightings for Final Honours Classification

The third and fourth year curriculum of single and joint honours Archaeology students was recently reformed as part of a complete revision of the Archaeology syllabus. As part of the reconstruction of the third and fourth year provision, assessment and honours classification were revised and assessment methods were changed. We previously had a system in which an important final year dissertation, based on a year of the student's individual research, stood alongside conventional final examination papers. In the revised syllabus, we distinguish between courses in the theory, method and practice; and courses concerned with themes or with the archaeology of a particular period and area. Students still submit a dissertation, which is weighted double the value of any other paper.

The innovations in assessment concern the courses. Assessment of courses in archaeological theory, method and practice is based primarily on a substantial piece of coursework appropriate to the course (a long essay, a report, or a portfolio). Students also take a single, three-hour, three-question, pre-released, general paper which relates rather indirectly to the four such courses they have taken (for single honours - a slightly different form of paper for joint honours students). Assessment of thematic and area/period courses is based on coursework (usually a single essay - worth one third of the assessment) and a two-hour, two-question examination paper (worth two thirds of the assessment).

The effect is a significant shift towards (a) variety of assessable work, (b) the accumulation of (provisional) assessments based on course-work over third and fourth year, and (c) almost half of the assessment used for final honours classification is based on work done outside the examination hall.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 13

Formative Assessment and Appraisal in Clinically Based Studies

The initiative has been developed to improve the formative assessment of students' clinical practice in the Clinically Based Studies (CBS) modules of the BSc Diagnostic Radiography course. The aim is to monitor and provide feedback on the student's progress in developing clinical skills and in achieving clinical competence. While CBS is essentially competence-based, the strategy involves assessment of the student's levels of achievement in broadly defined Domains of Practice rather than individual competencies. This enables evaluation of the student's overall abilities to develop and integrate clinical skills, and to adapt to varying clinical situations, irrespective of the specific examinations carried out.

The student's levels of achievement in the domains of practice are assessed on a weekly basis during clinical placements by supervising clinical staff. These are discussed with the student and recorded in the student's clinical log, together with a record of examinations undertaken during the placement and regularly monitored by the Clinical Tutor. At the end of each level an appraisal of the student will be undertaken by the Clinical Tutor using the formative assessment as a guide. At an appraisal interview the student's own self-assessment of his/her performance and progress is discussed and the appraisal report and marks are agreed by the student and the Clinical Tutor.

By concentrating on domains of practice rather than individual competencies, the formative assessment scheme enables progressive assessment of the student's overall level of competence at each level of the course. The detailed feedback from regular formative assessment and annual appraisal provides the student with a resource for reflection and self-assessment.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 141

A Community Course Within the New Medical Undergraduate Curriculum

The initiative was introduced as core component of an entirely new medical undergraduate curriculum, unrolling from the 1995/96 student intake, which has been developed in the light of approved educational practice, a shift in the emphasis of health care provision from hospital to community and influenced by GMC guidelines and SHEFC policy. The emphasis of the new curriculum, and this course in particular, is on individual deep process learning, group work and problem-solving in a community-oriented context.

Six departments have collaborated to design, deliver, assess and evaluate a Community Course which includes small group tutorials, field visits (to families in their own homes), self-directed learning and no lectures. The students were randomly allocated into 20 groups of eight. The course is delivered by 20 trained tutors, 10 general medical practitioners (GPs) in their practices and 10 campus-based university staff. Tutors prepare teaching plans prior to tutorials, with full evaluation and feedback, during twelve mornings over two terms.

The course is assessed by a group project (poster presentation) and an individual written assignment (based on field visits). The posters will be part peer-assessed by other groups and intra-group peer assessment is used to assess individual contributions towards the poster. The written assignments will be double marked. All four of these assessment components are new strategies and will be developed as the course unrolls through the first three years of the medical undergraduate curriculum.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☑ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 170

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Database entry ref: 295

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Assessment of Computer Algebra

The aim of this initiative was to examine the use of the computer algebra package "Maple" by means of practical assignments ranging from routine manipulation to sophisticated mathematical problems. One course was given to mathematics students and another to engineers and scientists. The key to success in such a scheme is the careful selection of appropriate investigations and regular feedback to students. This method of assessment underlined the practical aspects of mathematics and the usefulness of technology. Students were very positive about both courses, and in particular about the process as well as the content.

Instead of the conventional testing of students' skills in algebraic manipulation, etc., (which are still important and tested in other courses) this new course tested students' skills in converting a mathematical problem into a form which a computer algebra package will recognise. This requires knowledge of the formal structure of the language involved and of the many special functions built in to that language. The advantage is that much more complicated and realistic problems can be covered than would be possible using hand calculations. Another feature is that the students can easily graph complicated functions and gain important insights which would otherwise be difficult to attain.

Instead of the conventional end-of-term exam, students are required to hand in a finished worksheet at weekly intervals during the course covering between 10 and 20 problems. A subset of 50% or more of these problems are marked (the students do not know in advance which subset will be marked). The finished worksheet combines output of high quality mathematical typesetting with computer graphics. The assessment is based entirely on the results of these assignments which are marked by a graduate student under the supervision of the lecturer concerned. The marker inserts the marks directly into a computer file which is available for inspection at any time.

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 150

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Database entry ref: 56

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Assignment Scheduling, Control and Result Collation

Prior to this initiative there was no formalisation, structure or responsible person for the scheduling during term time of the various assignments required for each taught module. This resulted in students being overloaded with work during specific periods of the term. This was raised as a problem at the staff student consultative committee meetings. Students returned work directly to staff concerned and no records were kept which identified late submissions, which are penalised by grading to a minimum pass. When assignments had been assessed the responsible lecturer had no defined route to return the results, for collation of marks or returning of assignments to students.

The initiative introduced in 1990 formalised the system as follows:

- A responsible person within the course team was to be designated for scheduling and issuing of assignment dates to balance the student workload throughout the term.
- A control sheet was devised to record the expected and actual return dates for each student and each assignment.
- Each year was allocated a designated area with a responsible person to record receipt and time of assignment submission.
- The individual lecturers were made responsible for uplifting the assignments within a specified period of the hand-in date.
- The deputy course leader was given the responsibility of collating the marks for the examination board.
- All lecturers now have to return the marking grid to the deputy course leader.

Start date: Autumn 1990

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☑ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 150

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Database entry ref: 287

Clarification of Assessment in Architectural Education

Assessment in architectural education has traditionally occurred in 'crits', in which students present and explain their project work before a panel of assessors. The students receive feedback from the assessors and a grade is allocated later. The disadvantages of this system are that the assessment criteria and the relationship between 'crit' and grade can be unclear and that it can be dominated by the personalities of the panel and hence intimidating.

The aim of this initiative was to introduce a formal structure that would be clear and consistent for both students and staff and yet comprehensive and appropriate to the complexity of each assignment. The breadth of this aim demanded a phased process:

Step One: A standard form, listing a comprehensive range of assessment criteria, was developed. This avoids imbalance in assessment.

Step Two: An assessment group was established, to monitor, adapt and implement the form. In addition this group considered other methods of assessment, two of which have since been implemented:

• The students must complete a self-assessment form before each 'crit'. This is later compared to the assessors' form and differences are discussed. The aim is to develop an objective and appropriate approach to self assessment.

• A mid-year interview in which year-master and student discuss the student's general academic and individual progress. In preparation the student is required to assess their progress to date and this is used as the basis for discussion. The aim is to offer an informal alternative to the crit system and is particularly valuable for those students who find crits stressful. It also offers an opportunity for students to discuss any special areas of interest or concern.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 286

A System for Overseeing Part-Time Tutoring

This initiative is not primarily about student assessment, although that does form a part of it. The main aim is to maintain the quality of the tutoring system for the first year course in Architectural History following the introduction in 1994/5 of tutoring by postgraduates and other part-time teachers. While the actual quality of teaching in the tutorials was not at issue, two possible problems were anticipated: a goal of consistency in the marking standards applied by tutors, and difficulties of access to tutors who did not have a permanent base in the department.

To deal with this it was decided that the full-time staff should maintain links with the tutoring of this course; indeed, this was considered to be generally 'a good thing' in any case. Therefore, each full-time member of staff (three in all) takes responsibility for two tutors and their groups. These overseeing tutors have a number of functions:

* They mark a sample of each essay handed in, to help assure consistency and fairness.

* They are available to give advice to students at any time, but especially when their main tutor is not available.

* They are available to give advice to inexperienced tutors.

* They take tutorials from time to time

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 140

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Database entry ref: 85

Self- and Peer-Assessment of Team Teaching in Engineering Management

The class of up to 60 final-year students is split into ten "teaching teams" of up to six students. The task of the teaching teams is to teach the remainder of the class a specified engineering management topic.

Assessment takes a variety of forms:

- The class assesses the effectiveness of the teaching team's performance, recording the results on a previously circulated yellow form.
- The teaching teams assess the effectiveness of their own performance by setting and marking a three-hour mock examination.
- The individual members of the teaching teams assess each other, using a pre-circulated pink form.
- The course coordinator assesses each student's logbook.
- The course coordinator sets and marks a formal two-hour examination.

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Database entry ref: 200

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Learning Logs

This initiative involves students using "learning logs", which are a form of diary used for recording and enhancing experiential learning. Whilst students on various programmes have used learning logs to record their learning from "classroom" activities, the initiative outlined here involved students using logs for workplace activities. The students concerned are on a part-time Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management Programme, which leads to Graduate Membership of the Institute of Personnel and Development.

The steps involved are as follows:

1. Using guide-lines, and after discussion with the workplace manager, participants prepare individual development plans for a year ahead.
2. The development activities are implemented by participants at their individual workplaces over a twelve month period.
3. Participants maintain a "log" of these activities. This is a reflective and analytical account highlighting key learning points and difficulties.
4. Students discuss progress with and get some feedback from their individual tutors during the year.
5. The logs are finally assessed and analysed by the tutor.

It is important to use a flexible approach to allow for differences in individual ability, experience and workplace opportunity. At the same time there is a requirement for consistency to allow assessment as part of academic and professional requirements of the Diploma course.

Students are provided with detailed guidelines relating to the format of the log and what should be included in it, including how many skills activities to include and what assessment criteria will be adopted.

Start date: Autumn 1991

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Database entry ref: 261

Work Placement Project

A voluntary course unit for third year undergraduates in the MA Honours History of Art Degree was established in 1992. Between October and December students work for 20 days, 2 days per week at a host institution, usually in or near Edinburgh. They learn about the general running of the workplace and undertake a specific piece of project work. Past examples include cataloguing collections, writing information pamphlets, organising storage of collections, researching and mounting exhibitions, researching garden history, preparing conservation case histories, labelling works of art, preparing museum displays and conducting surveys.

The student and host agree a learning contract which specifies the expectations of both parties. At the end of the placement period students write a report which forms one ninth of their final degree classification. This report is centred round an academic topic or group of works of art. It includes a section - not more than one third - of self assessment. It is submitted at the end of term 2 and is the only element of the workplacement which has a formal mark.

Fortnightly tutorials monitor students throughout the placement and while they are writing their report. A workshop on how to give a presentation, using materials prepared by the University's TLA Centre, prepares the students for the delivery of a talk to the second year about their experiences. The record of this presentation forms part of the student's profile. The host institution provides a short pro-forma report on each student.

The alternative to the workplacement is a project essay, a traditional mini-dissertation.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 15-25

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Database entry ref: 263

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Learning Contracts in a Consumer Policy Module

Learning contracts were introduced into the Consumer Policy module to capture the interest of students in an area which is core for those studying for a BA (Honours) Applied Consumer Studies. These contracts are drawn up within the framework of stated aims and learning outcomes for the module. Each contract is short-term for an assignment which is largely negotiable between the student and the Module Co-ordinator.

This initiative aims to provide an intellectually demanding method of assessment which permits flexibility without sacrificing academic rigour. Such an approach helps to meet the diverse needs and ambitions of students in the honours year of a multidisciplinary programme. The teaching and learning for this module takes place during 24 x 2 hours sessions spread over two semesters. Students negotiate an appropriate topic, aims, activities, resources, learning outcomes, mode(s) of assessment, breakdown of marks, work length and submission date of assignment. By Week 4, they submit their learning contracts. The contract form was adapted from Paul and Shaw 's A Manual of Contract Learning (Leeds Polytechnic, 1991).

At four-weekly intervals, the students' progress is monitored during individual tutorials (typically 5 - 10 minutes per student) and a monitoring form is completed. The tutorials present the lecturer with an opportunity to ensure students are fulfilling the aims and learning outcomes of their study. This process may also result in amendments to the original contract given that the learning contract is a "continuously negotiable working agreement". Without doubt, the monitoring process enhances the quality of student output.

Student comment on learning contracts has been highly favourable. They appreciate that their individual learner differences were addressed by this assessment approach. The flexibility and greater freedom of choice were also considered as beneficial to the learning experience.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 12-18

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Database entry ref: 138

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Independent Study Module Assessment

An Independent Study module is offered at Napier within the CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme) Combined Studies Degree. It provides students with an opportunity to design, with support from and in negotiation with a specialist tutor, their own module.

The module proposal, which includes learning outcomes, rationale for undertaking the module, pattern of study, resource requirement and mode of assessment, has to meet formal requirements in terms of level of study, coherence and relevance to the rest of the student's approved degree programme in the CAT scheme. It does mean however, that the students has the opportunity to negotiate a set of learning outcomes which they can provide evidence of achieving, through agreement of the kinds and forms of evidence that will be produced and the ways in which these will be assessed by the specialist tutor.

Once the proposal - which operates as a learning contract - is agreed it then has to be approved by the Independent Studies Panel. After approval the student works to produce the evidence required by the jointly designed assessment specification.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [x] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 350

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Database entry ref: 91

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Transcript of Performance for Final Year Honours Students in Agriculture

The traditional classification of degrees into classes provides relatively little specific information about performance that could be helpful to the student concerned or to prospective employers, while informal comments or whether a 2/1 or 2/2 was a 'good' one or not may be more exasperating than constructive.

Following therefore an idea originating in the Department of German, all assessed work in the final year of the BSc in Agricultural Science is used to create a transcript of performance which students 'take away' with them after graduation. Each transcript of performance shows the grade awarded to the student in each of eight intermittent assessments and eight written examinations, together with the grades awarded for eight aspects of the research thesis: thesis plan, use of literature, practical, cogency/structure, methods, results, discussion and conclusions and creativity.

Start date: Summer 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 80

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Database entry ref: 18

Assessing Presentation Skills

Peer Assessment of Student Talks

For some years now we have given each student in smaller classes, or pairs of students in larger ones, a topic with a few key references, and asked them to make a presentation of 15-20 minutes on it to the rest of the class. While often not enjoying the experience, most have felt that giving these talks was valuable to them. However, questionnaire returns suggested that audience members gained rather less, as talks were projected more at the staff present and less at their peers.

We therefore introduced score sheets on which students were asked to rate how much they gained from the talks of others on a five-point scale (5=excellent, 1=poor). This seems to have led to clearer presentations and a more sympathetic rapport between speaker and audience. Questionnaires are now more uniformly positive about listening to the talks of others, although there is some dislike of judging them.

Assessment is based partly (50%) on the mean grade accorded by the rest of the class, but we also base it 50% on staff scores to ensure that factual accuracy and completeness are given some credit, and that there is less proneness to gaining high credit for merely being entertaining. This balance seems to work quite well.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 40

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Database entry ref: 121

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Student Seminar Presentation and Defence

The course Comparative Economics was traditionally assessed by written coursework, essay and a final examination. The new initiative takes the form of seminar presentations as part of the coursework assessment. The students are given a list of broad subject areas from which they choose their specific topic. Assessment depends upon the quality of the arguments presented, the quality of the presentations given, the presenter's ability to defend his/her corner and the quality of a seminar report submitted one week after the seminar.

The initiative is intended to signal to the students that in this course they must "learn" the answers to certain questions and not expect to be "taught" but "guided". The students come up with their own hypotheses to be formulated, tested, presented and defended. To most of them it will be their first opportunity to do a little independent research. This gives the assessor a glimpse not only into the student's ability to learn a specific topic but also into his/her ability to think independently and defend one's own findings.

Start date: Spring 1988

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 20-30

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Assessment of Presentation Skills

Since the beginning of the degree programme in Risk Management in 1982, oral presentation has played an important part. However this aspect was not assessed in its own right until a review of the programme, and its development into a four-year, honours degree in 1990. The increasing emphasis which employers were placing on skills in oral presentation, and the feedback we were receiving from our own graduates, convinced the programme team that this particular aspect of skills development required more attention.

A dedicated module, entitled Integrative Studies, and taught throughout levels 1, 2 and 3 aimed to develop students' personal transferable skills over a wide range of activities, including oral presentation. Since the University modularised and semesterised its programmes in September 1994, this module has been incorporated into the core Risk Management modules of each of the first three levels.

In level 1, the students research a topic within a group of four to five and make an oral presentation of around five minutes, as part of a group presentation to their student colleagues. The assessment of this aspect contributes to 10% of the student's final mark. Feedback is given in the form of an individual discussion with the student, and a brief, written, qualitative report. In level 2, the group presentation is filmed on video and the students discuss the playback with the tutor. Being able to see oneself is a valuable learning experience and although students were initially reluctant to be filmed, this now meets with their approval. The assessment is worth 20% of the final mark. In level 3, the Case Study module still requires a written and an oral presentation, of around 15 minutes, with a viva. By this stage, a highly professional presentation using appropriate overheads is expected. Assessment of the oral presentation is worth 30% of the final mark.

Start date: Autumn 1990

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 130

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Adjudication of Oral Presentations

Students enter the third year of the Biochemistry course with the intention of achieving an honours degree at the end of the fourth year. Their training in the skills of presentation must therefore begin as early as possible, since they will be required to present discussions of literature and their own project results in their final year.

One of the eight tutorial classes attended by the students is connected with the Molecular Biology lecture module. Since the lectures are principally concerned with laboratory techniques such as cloning, sequencing, polymerase chain reaction, the students are asked to read the background material for one technique and to prepare a seven minute oral presentation for a group meeting in three weeks' time. In each group of 6-8 students, a maximum of two will be talking about each technique. Students are provided with acetate sheets and pens. At the presentation tutorial, each student gives an individual talk. The tutor leads the discussion after each presentation.

Adjudication marks are entered onto a form which is provided for each student. Marks and comments are provided in sections for Introduction, Delivery, Content, Visual Aids, Timing. Possible marks range from zero to 6 for each of the Contents and Visual Aids sections; fewer marks for the other sections. The total possible marks, 21, are distributed along a spectrum from G- to A+, demonstrating the final grade. Most of the form allows comments to be made, either by marking around the printed comments (e.g. too little depth/about right/too much detail) or by writing specific comments at the bottom of the form. The overall grade is returned to the course organiser. The adjudication sheet is given to the students.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 35

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Database entry ref: 153

Teaching and Assessing through Oral Presentations

This assessment initiative aims to develop the use of oral presentations for teaching and assessing professional communication skills, as well as theoretical understanding and practical professional judgement, in a one year post-graduate primary teacher education course. It has developed assessment criteria, advice on oral presentations, video feedback and tutor training in relation to assessment through oral presentations.

Key aspects of student learning are assessed following each of five teaching placements. The presentations cover a range of topics (e.g. nursery education principles, reading policy, progression in learning, action research on learning difficulties, class management) and over the year involve a range of oral presentation/discussion skills: direct presentation, presentations with audience participation, fielding questions and leading discussions.

Students are provided with an advice booklet, video examples of presentation skills, video, written and oral feedback on their performances. They are also encouraged to reflect on their own performance and to seek support from fellow students.

Developments to date have been encouraging, with students clearly appreciating video examples (e.g. seeing that other students are also nervous and especially examples of progression in student learning over a course). The effectiveness of open task remits with clear criteria has been highlighted; in the past very structured tasks led to more descriptive rather than analytic presentations. Current attention is turning to the crucial role of tutor training and tutor perceptions in the progress of students in this area. Examples of how students can show evidence of theoretical understanding and practical judgement through oral presentations are also being developed. The age-old issue of the relation of form to content has come very much to the fore in this project and we are now examining this in some detail.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Assessing Workplace Communication Skills in Environmental Management

The assessment (counting for 30% of the total marks) requires students to self-select an environmental topic and research this independently. They then have to present this to their peer group, who mark the project within strict quality guidelines on the criteria to be used. This mimics the need in business for management presentational skills - met at the moment rather unevenly. The emphasis is on 'selling' the need for improved environmental quality, using British Standard 7750 as a benchmark.

In a situation which parallels that of a lecturer amending a conference paper prior to submitting it for publication, the students are subsequently required to recast and improve their oral presentations in the form of formal written reports. In assessing the students' performance, 15% of the overall marks for the course is allocated to the peer group assessments, while a further 15% derives from the lecturer's assessment of the written reports, taking into account points raised during the presentations themselves.

The quality of the student research output is astonishingly high and many papers are of publishable standard. In addition the learning is deep and has resulted in a significant improvement in exam performance.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 16

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Database entry ref: 175

Assessment of a Combined Conference Paper and Presentation

With the aim of developing high-level communication skills, final-year Physics students prepare a written paper and oral presentation for a fourth-year conference held at the end of the Spring term. Each student selects from a range of topics offered by staff with, typically, three to five students selecting a common topic area and collaborating as a team under the supervision of one or more members of staff. Each team produces a set of individually researched and prepared complementary written papers, papers which then form the basis for their individual written presentations.

This major assignment builds on earlier communication skills teaching in the first three years of the degree programme and is underpinned by three workshops dealing with various aspects of the conference paper and talk.

Each conference paper and oral presentation has to be aimed at the general physical science graduate and must conform with a closely prescribed format characteristic of academic conference papers in physics, including the provision of an abstract. Papers are assessed for: scientific content; structure, readability and level; general layout and presentation. Following the presentations, the supervisors concerned arrange feedback sessions on content structure and style.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☑ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 71

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Database entry ref: 6

Group-Based Video Assessment in Business Policy

This assessment initiative was developed to assess elements of the higher cognitive domain through a combination of group work, communication skills and peer assessment.

Originally taking the form of a seminar paper, the assessment has evolved to become a video presentation, making the delivery more fun and interesting, providing an excellent means of student feedback and allowing a permanent record for student reference.

The assessment carries a 20% weighting and requires students to work in teams of three to produce, edit and present a video entitled "The Way Ahead". The students analyse a company using principles of business policy and submit the video as assessment. The videos can be in any style from animation to formal interview and the range of equipment available is of a very high technical standard.

The videos are assessed by the tutor and class peer members on the dimensions of analysis, content, presentation and theoretical application, and each group of students is awarded the aggregate mark to be divided as they see fair between the three members of the group. The student groups then report on how and why the marks were divided; this allows the tutor to monitor procedures in the interest of all students.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 15

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Poster Presentations for Research Projects

In their final honours year, Chemical Engineering students pursue an experimental or computer-based research project in groups of one or two. The traditional mode of assessment has been an oral presentation of the results by the students to an audience of the rest of the class and the academic staff, followed by a semi-formal meeting of the students with the supervisor and second marker, both of whom have read the full project report documents, at which the finer details of the work can be discussed. However, this format is no longer viable because of the very large number of students now in the final year, which would necessitate either extending the presentations over two or more days or reducing the time for each group's presentation to an unrealistically short spell.

The oral presentation had two functions, firstly to give the students a chance to display their communication skills and secondly to disseminate awareness in the department of what final-year research projects were in progress. It was decided that the latter function would be equally well served by a poster presentation which would be available for academic and research staff to walk round for a day and talk to and question the students manning it. This would allow a rather greater degree of informality and would give staff the maximum opportunity to concentrate on those projects in which they were most interested. Equally, the production of a poster would give lasting and tangible evidence of the students' communication skills which should make for fairer assessment than ephemeral and subjective impressions of a short oral delivery. The poster will form a focus for the subsequent semi-formal meeting between the students, the supervisor and the second marker, whose format will be unchanged.

Poster presentations are increasingly popular at conferences and the experience of preparing one under assessed conditions will be most valuable for students pursuing a career in academic or industrial research.

Start date: Summer 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 39

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Database entry ref: 59

Assessing Student Projects by Poster Presentations

As from 1993/94, medical students in Edinburgh do Special Study Modules in their sixth term. One of these Modules is on Exercise. Part of it involves projects, on which students work in teams of three to four one day a week for eight weeks. They are assessed on their projects in two ways: (a) via an essay, written by each student, whose subject is related to their project (20% of total marks for course); and (b) via a poster produced by the group and for which each individual in the group gets the same mark (20% of total for course).

Each group is given a display area of 115 x 85 cm and has access to standard computer packages for producing the poster material. In 1993/94 the students were given some pointers on how to present posters but probably not enough; we shall be giving them more in future years. The posters were assessed by two members of staff using a standard check-list for guidance; they agreed about as well as they did when marking the class's written work. Students were subsequently given feedback on their presentations. Although the assessors did not quiz the students on their posters, we shall do so in 1994/95, partly to probe their basic understanding of the subject, and partly to try to ensure all the students in the group have contributed significantly to the work.

The students enjoyed the novelty, design skills and group interaction of producing their posters. They were pleased to see their work displayed in an attractive way and inspected by their peers as well as members of staff not involved directly in the course. In future the best posters may be put on semi-permanent display. The assessors, it should also be noted, appreciated the variety introduced by having posters rather than still more essays to mark.

Start date: Summer 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 35

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Database entry ref: 43

47

Assessing an Undergraduate Research Project by Thesis, Poster and Conference Presentation

Three months before work on their research project begins, students are given Honours Project guidelines and a pro forma. The emphasis is on them to choose a subject area to research and they submit their pro forma as soon as they have decided on their topic. The pro forma asks the student to identify the research hypothesis, propose a methodology, consider ethics, health and safety issues, and estimate the costs and a time scale for their work. The Honours Project Co-ordinator uses the completed pro forma to select a supervisor and/or advisors for the project.

The student then works on their own on their project. It involves collecting data and is research based, not solely a review of a topic. The student does have access to their supervisor, but this is restricted to 20 hours. The student works a total of 350 hours on their research, including writing, presentation, data collecting, etc.

The student submits the thesis which is marked by two to three markers. The mark represents 80% of five modules. The remaining 20% is derived from an oral presentation and poster presentation at a student conference. The bulk of the marks depends on students' ability to describe and discuss their project findings, and on their introduction which is a critique of an area of research, rather than a merely descriptive review.

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 50-60

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Database entry ref: 130

Developing and Assessing Skills through Seminar Presentations

This module is a skills-based course in which students develop a range of practical skills through group work and discussion. The purpose of the seminar presentation assignment is to assess the students' skills in working as a group, communicating ideas through the use of visual aids, role play and oral communication. The ability to respond to questions which are prepared or unprepared is also assessed. A choice of topics is given to the students and they are encouraged to form self-selected groups. The topics used in year 1 of the Elective have included customer care programmes, outdoor development programmes for management training, job sharing at home and work and one with the title, 'Why Zoos?'. The choice of topic reflects the interests of the students and works particularly well with mature students who have some experience.

The presentation should fulfil the following criteria

- Length 10-15 minutes
- Introduction of group members
- Explanation of aims and objectives of the presentation
- Inclusion of a clear discussion which gives different viewpoints
- Equal use of all members of the group
- Ability to respond to prepared and unprepared questions which arise from a discussion within the class.

The students are involved in agreeing what the marking criteria should be. A group mark is given for the presentation which is moderated by the students using a peer assessment. The assessment in this module counts for 40% of the total marks. The presentation is marked by two tutors who agree a final mark. The students are given feedback in the form of written and verbal comments.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [x] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 48

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Database entry ref: 112

Group Assessment of Presentations in Anthropology

Presentations by sets of three students were introduced last session. These are given in their tutorial groups of about twelve.

This session the presentations are themselves to be formally assessed, in two parts. A total of 5% of course marks will be allocated to the co''ective presentation, i.e. each group of three, and 5% to each individual student's 500-word report of his or her group's series of presentations.

At this stage the tutor will be responsible for allocating both marks, but the audience for each presentation is asked to mark it too. This is to be done individually by means of an assessment sheet listing headings for evaluation. The tutor will discuss presentation marks to be allocated with each group and may, in the light of the discussion, modify his/her own mark. If this works successfully in the current session, we may try to move on to giving students a greater share in the allocation of marks.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 145

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A Shift to Continuous Assessment of Student-Led Seminars

A History and Computing undergraduate course on the theme of Nineteenth Century Family Fortunes has been offered at Glasgow for some years. We decided this year (1995) to re-write all the documentation, which is substantial, for Windows-based software -- Access, Excel V and Word 6. This was a major undertaking. At the same time the opportunity was taken to replace all but one lecture by student-led seminars and to make the course entirely continuously assessed. The assessment is based on seminar performance, a seminar presentation, an essay, a skills test and a mini-project.

This was a brave decision, which in the course tutors' opinion has been entirely justified. In the weekly sessions there are two presentations from opposing standpoints that take twenty minutes, and which then form the basis for a discussion led by a chairman, who also acts as a rapporteur. In the lab sessions (two hours a week) students learn how to use Access and Excel by going through a series of worked examples and then constructing their own queries and analysis using a workbook specially prepared for the purpose.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 196

51

Student Presentations in Literary Theory

This experiment took place in a class on literary theory with about twenty students. Each week two students were asked to produce papers on a given topic. The first student, the initiator, wrote a paper designed to initiate discussion. Their paper was photostatted and a copy given to the second student, the respondent. It was the second student's business to respond to the contents of the first paper. Both students were required to deliver their papers in a formal way from a lectern in front of the class.

The students who, in any given week, submitted papers in this way were permitted, though not required, to revise the papers they had written in the light of the ensuing discussion, and to submit them as one of the essays they were asked to produce as classwork for the course.

Students who chose not to revise their papers, simply chose an alternative essay topic from a list provided in the usual way. This latter provision was to prevent students having to spend more time on a particular topic than they wished to, or, alternatively, to allow them the opportunity to acquaint themselves with a wider range of material.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 20

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52 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Problem-Based Assessment in Medical Embryology

At least part of the difficulty we experience in training medical students to think may arise from the methods of assessment we use. Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and, to a lesser extent, short-answer questions (SAQs) promote learning for detailed factual recall, and setting a relatively small number of essays for a range of potential topics encourages attempts to 'spot' questions. A further problem is that there is much less tutorial contact time with students than an equivalent science class would have, and it is therefore difficult to encourage good habits of thinking in a direct way. Since any attempt to resolve these problems cannot be based on increased staff input, I have attempted to find a way of altering the distribution of time spent in marking via a scheme I have called "Problem Based Examining" which I introduced in 1994-95, in the Second Year Embryology teaching (part of Human Anatomy 2).

The students were invited to form teams of four during the year, and select a problem from a set choice of three. These problems were wide-ranging in their nature, and could include clinical, surgical, legal, social and ethical implications as well as their developmental basis. They therefore intentionally posed questions not covered in the course. Teams were briefed at a 15 minute introductory session, in which advice was given on presentation, team work, and information acquisition skills. They were given two weeks to prepare a 15 minute group presentation. This was then assessed by me using a standard marking form, and a team mark awarded which exempted the students from some questions in the class or degree exam, provided that the PBE team mark was at least 60%.

Presentation sessions were open to other students and staff. There was a question opportunity at the end, which could contribute to the mark. Then the team was debriefed, given advice to improve, and their mark was explained and discussed.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 100

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Database entry ref: 100

Assessing Group- and Teamwork

Group Reports and Group Presentations in a Special Study Module

The special study module (SSM), which forms part of Phase 1 of the MBChB degree, lasts for five weeks. The class are split up into five 'theme-groups' of 32 students who attend an introductory week of seminars on a common theme (eg BrainStorming, Nature-Nurture, Metabolism). They then split into groups of eight to pursue a particular topic (eg in the BrainStorming theme; Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease, Stroke). They have three weeks in which to produce a group oral presentation (15 mins), a group written report (2,500 words), and an individual short summary.

An important part of the SSM is that the students become involved in the assessment process so that they develop a clearer understanding of what identifies a good written report and oral presentation. Therefore, each aspect of the work is assessed by both staff and students. The group report and the group oral presentation are marked by the other three groups in the theme. In addition, each student is marked by other members of the group on their performance and contribution to the group.

The criteria by which written and oral presentations are to be assessed are agreed at two seminars involving the whole class. The results of these seminars are used to construct marking proformas which are distributed before the assessment period starts. Should a group feel that a particular member is not contributing their fair share they may, in consultation with the tutor, issue a 'yellow card' formal warning. If performance does not improve they can as a last resort issue a 'red card' which will expel the student from the group. All members of the group then lose their Group Performance mark and the expelled student has to submit a full length report on their own. Satisfactory performance in the Phase I SSM is an absolute requirement for entry to Phase II. If students fail the SSM, they can submit an individual extended essay selected from a list of subjects related to the theme.

Start date: Spring 1996

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 160

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Group Essays in Law

Public Law 1 is a compulsory and "full" course for all first year Law students. It is in part an attempt to introduce transferable skills and in part is a response to the steady increase in student numbers. Regular tutorial meetings, latterly of some 12 students, were replaced by larger tutorial meetings, of 25 students, and study groups of 5-6 students, as subdivisions of the main tutorial group. In the second year of this experiment, students were required to produce a group essay of 5,000 words (in place of a standard essay of 1200 words per student). The study group subsequently were given the responsibility of allocating marks amongst students - i.e. the overall group mark could be allocated amongst individual members of the group in any way the group thought fit (although suggested guidelines were distributed to the class).

While the work was well above standard, and indeed the external examiner considered some of the work to be of Honours standard, two problems arose. First, some students felt that a group exercise was inappropriate where this formed part of the exemption scheme. Many students also reported that the exercise had caused considerable angst amongst members, especially when it came to the allocation of marks. Here, most groups merely allocated the marks equally amongst individuals, but in a handful of cases, marks appear to have been "traded" where students who were by this time not eligible for an exemption pass were prepared to "donate" their marks to others in the group.

Student evaluations were considered by the course team. There was a strong sense that the experiment should continue, but that there should be even greater emphasis on explaining the rationale first of study group meetings, and second of the group exercise. Course documentation this session indicates that there is a presumption that marks will be allocated equally, unless a group can justify to the course convenor on academic grounds the reasons for any distinction between group members.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 210

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Database entry ref: 231

Personal Accounts of Learning in a Groupwork Programme

Thirty-five BA in Community Education students undertake a three-module groupwork programme as part of their course. The programme seeks to develop the student's learning on three levels of thinking, feeling and doing. Because of the special requirements of such learning we felt that at this foundation, first-module stage a conventional pass/fail "grading" approach would be inappropriate. In essence, students need to be able to air difficulties and doubts to maximise their learning.

Whilst analysis of experience can be highly valuable in the learning process it is not feasible to grade. A student acknowledging feelings of dislike or mistrust of colleagues in a group situation, for example, is important but not "gradeable". The frankness required could best be fostered through use of a personal and individual account of learning written by each student. Reflecting on programme reading, class-based exercises, large group discussions, and small group learning processes (each student participates in a learning group of 7/8 people throughout the module), students have to write up observations from each session together with a summative 500-word statement of personal learning. This is reviewed by the two tutors and individual feedback given.

In addition learning is also assessed by the tutors, who write up student comments and feedback during all plenary sessions, and from the last session which is devoted to programme evaluation.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 35

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Database entry ref: 236

Peer Assessment of a Group Based on a Marketing Simulation

This initiative was stimulated by students' criticisms of assessments in which all members of a team receive the same grade for a group assignment regardless of individual contributions.

Computer-based management and marketing simulations have been used quite widely at this institution for some time now. They are believed to be an effective vehicle firstly for the development of certain transferable skills (e.g. problem-solving and team-working) and secondly for demonstrating in a relevant and captivating way some application issues.

In a number of cases, a component of the assessment of a module has been based on the simulation, partly to provide evidence of the acquisition of skills and partly to provide students with an extra incentive to treat the exercise seriously. Where one of the ostensible reasons for using such a simulation is to provide experience of team problem-solving and decision-making, it makes sense to use a group assignment of some sort as the assessment instrument. Unfortunately, there are groups with members who do not pull their weight, but who receive a high mark as a result of their colleagues' efforts (usually much to the chagrin of their hard-working team-mates).

Following such criticism of one of the units of assessment on the module in question in session 1994/95, it was decided to incorporate a form of peer assessment into that unit of assessment for session 1995/96. At the time of writing, the precise design of the assessment instrument has not been finalised, but the concept is that the grade awarded to an individual would be based partly on the grade awarded to the group assignment and partly on fellow team-members' rating of that individual's contribution to the group's activities.

Start date: Spring 1996

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 50

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Database entry ref: 248

Using Peer Assessment to Enhance Learning in Groups

Students from two courses (BA Publishing Studies and BA Librarianship and Information Studies) take Bookselling as a common module. They are allocated to groups for the duration of the module. The assessment scheme is threefold:

1) *A group project*: a group mark is awarded, then moderated by a peer assessment factor based in student-derived criteria (80%)

2) *A presentation*: The group presentation may be made by one or all in the group, but all receive the same mark (marked by the tutor and others in class, using student-derived criteria (10%)

3) *A trade journal discussion*: Each week, one member of the group reads The Bookseller and leads a discussion on an item of interest. This is assessed by the others in the group using student-derived criteria (10%).

The criteria are devised during one-hour tutorial sessions at the start of the module, using "negative brain storming" to trigger discussion. These are then synthesised by the tutor, and sample sheets given to each student.

Evaluation of the system showed that students were reasonably satisfied that the peer assessment was fair. However, they were also using peer assessment in other units, using different criteria, and in different groups – and subsequently getting confused. A course policy has been devised as a result of this. The students are peer assessed on no more than two units per semester. For these two units they are in the same groups and use the same peer assessment criteria. This is also supported by a "Group Review" meeting with the tutor, twice per semester.

Start date: Suummer 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 70

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Database entry ref: 10

59 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Group Project Work in Sociology

This involved changing one unit of continuous assessment from an individual essay to a report on part of a group exercise. Students now complete three essays selected from six sets of two essays through the whole year, and an individual report on a group project, submitted at the end of the year. Each piece of work contributes 15% of the overall mark; the remaining 40% is provided by the degree examination in June, which must be passed for the course to be passed as a whole.

Group projects have been chosen by the students, either from a list supplied in advance or on a subject they themselves have suggested, in order to apply some of the insights provided by the course to a substantive area which is not directly covered in lectures or suggested reading. The groups are subsets of the weekly tutorial groups with three or four members. Some time in some of the weekly tutorials is set aside to monitor progress, but planning the reading and activities for the groups largely take place outside the tutorial setting.

The groups make collective presentations during the final two weeks of the course. The individual reports are marked on their own merits, but the group also allocates a proportion of the marks according to its own criteria, such as contribution to the overall effort. Students who do not submit an individual report do not receive a mark; students who for acceptable reasons (illness, etc.) have not been able to take part in the group project are exceptionally allowed to submit a fourth essay.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 70

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Database entry ref: 51

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An Integrative, Client-Centred Communication Project

In the second year of the BA Communication course at Napier, all students are required to undertake a core module entitled Integrative Project 2. This module takes the form of live projects, whereby the course acts virtually as a communication agency. Students are invited to divide themselves into groups according to their own interests, each of which is then given responsibility for a project with an external company that has identified some communication problem.

Over the fifteen weeks of the semester, students are expected to liaise with the client, to analyse and investigate his or her problem, to come up with proposed solutions, to put these to the client and negotiate their feasibility, and to carry out the agreed final programme. The assessment of the module is as follows:

a) Interim group presentation 10%
b) Final group presentation 30%
c) Group written report 50%
d) Tutorial assessment 10%

Each group is awarded a mark by the course team for elements a, b, and c, and the group is responsible for allocating the mark within the group. The group is encouraged to develop criteria for mark allocation from the outset of the module, but only in the case of irreconcilable differences do the staff team interfere or intervene in the allocation of marks within the group. The aim is to allow students to allocate marks according to their understanding of who has contributed most to the overall developing project. Considerable work is done on such group functions as gate-keeping, inspiring others, writing up minutes and so on. The final 10% for each student is given directly by staff on the basis of performance in class contact time.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 50

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Database entry ref: 11

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Student Involvement in Assessing Group Project Work

This initiative involves the adjustment of an individual student's marks for group project work, based on that student's contributions to the group.

In introducing group work in a new Work and Welfare course we were keen to assess students through a group report rather than individual reports. We saw this as integral to the success of the group project. However, we also wanted to take account of individual contributions which could vary widely between group members, leading to "free-rider" problems and a sense of injustice in the allocation of marks. To achieve this, we first allowed students to adjust the final mark +/- 5% for each group member, on the basis of recorded contributions through the course of the project. This did not work well as students were reluctant to penalise fellow members even where there was a strong sense of grievance about failure to contribute to group work. We then changed the assessment procedure to give a mark to each group member accumulated through regular attendance and contributions to the project on a weekly basis. Students merely recorded weekly attendance / contributions or filed notes explaining absence etc. and staff then allocated marks on this basis, and adjusted the project mark for each individual to take account of their contribution level e.g. 100% contributions = 100% of the group mark.

This system has worked much more effectively, both in eliminating the "free-rider" problem (students are punished severely for failure to contribute) and in adjusting marks through a procedure which positively rewards performance rather than requiring students to penalise colleagues. We believe an assessment procedure of this kind was an essential element in developing good group work.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Database entry ref: 12

Technical Reviews on a Software Engineering Course

Group project work is an important mechanism in a software engineering course, enabling students to work in situations which more closely reflect the workplace. An element of peer review can be introduced into the process to encourage the development of assessment skills on the part of the reviewer and to provide formative feedback to the student whose work is being assessed.

A further refinement of this activity is the Technical Review which is carried out by third year BEng (Hons) Software Engineering students on the work of the first year students. The first year students undertake a group project which enables them to develop their programming skills. The code developed by the group is then reviewed by a group of third year students who assess it according to the following criteria: design guidelines are followed; appropriate types of data; meaningful variable names; use of parameters; modularity; and maintainability. The reviewers generate a report which can be used to assess their programming skills and their analytical abilities. This report also provides an indication of the performance of the programmers whose code is being reviewed.

Both groups of students must demonstrate their interpersonal communication skills and their ability to think clearly and argue logically. One important spin-off benefit is that communications between students on the course are improved and a support network is established.

Start date: Spring 1996

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 120

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Database entry ref: 271

A Group Project With Electronic Submission and Feedback

Students on the Open University Course THD204 'Information Technology and Society' study from March until October, during which time they produce a number of Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs). The final assignment has two features new to mass courses within the OU:

- Rather than working singly, students produce their submissions in groups. A joint introduction and conclusion bind themes written by group members. Negotiation of roles and discussion of themes is carried out using computer conferencing. Groups of four or five are formed from tutor groups by the (local) course tutor, who monitors discussion within these subgroups as this also counts towards the final mark.

- Once the group submission is ready it is transferred to the tutor electronically - using the conference system - graded and commented on-screen and sent back the same way.

Neither of these features is entirely new to the OU, but this is the first course for which they have been combined for substantial numbers of undergraduate students. Around 800 students submitted projects in 1995 and it is expected that the number will be significantly higher in 1996 and thereafter.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: c.800

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Database entry ref: 250

The Assessment of Large Group Projects

An important component of degrees which aim to prepare students for working in and with communities is the experience of working effectively in groups and organisations of varying size. A module had been written in which the aim was to allow students to experience the difficulties of creating a structured organisation which would satisfy the needs and aspirations of each individual member, effectively plan and manage a given project and have the internal coherence which promotes clear communication channels, effective decision making, implementation and evaluation. Designing an assessment process which would be fair and give a measure of the competencies learned under circumstances in which each of 65 students played a unique role was an important and challenging part of the design.

The assessment method chosen involved measurement of performance, product, and reflection on learning. Performance of each individual was measured using **(a) attendance** - individual commitment to the process; **(b)** the maintenance of **Minutes of the Meetings** of groups and sub groups, the record of the process of negotiation, decision marking and evaluation; **(c) peer review** - the students' assessment of the particular contribution of their colleagues. The quality of the product was measured by (d) **comparison with the design brief criteria** of the given project which had been structured to enable individual project teams to adopt responsibility for defined sections of the task. Lastly reflection on learning was assessed by asking each student to write (e) a **reflective autobiography** in which they reviewed the significant learning experiences which had arisen during the project, explained how they made sense of these by relating the personal experience to theoretical models of group and organisational practice, and exploring how their learning might modify their approach to similar situations in the future.

Major assessment issues which arose from this project were: fair assessment, the ethics and implementation of peer review and the rationality of adding measurements of differing values to achieve a final grade

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 65

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Database entry ref: 296

History of the Study of Classical Antiquity Group Project

Half of the course consists of a group project - the group works together to create a display for Open Day. The group as a whole is given a mark for the display, and this is modified for individual members of the group, taking into account their individual contribution to the finished product.

In all instances so far, each student has undertaken a specific aspect or part of the display, and it has been possible to look at their individual contributions - a display board or a specific area within the display. However, each student in the group also has to take his/her turn at chairing project meetings and acting as secretary (minute taker), and each student also has to write a 'diary' each week, detailing what they have done and how their thoughts are progressing, with a final entry reflecting on the project as a whole. These documents, as well as the observations made by staff overseeing the project result in marks being assigned in a number of categories for individual students in the team. This is done in collaboration with the External Examiner. However, the External Examiner may not have been able to see the display on Open Day itself and will only know the students through their diaries etc.

The assessment is designed to look at how well the students work together, their ability to organise themselves and others and to work to a deadline, their creative imagination and flair and their communication skills. Those who score highly are not necessarily the ones who do best at more traditional academic tasks.

Start date: Summer 1991

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 28

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Database entry ref: 49

Systems Design Group Projects and Professional Issues Lectures

This combines a requirement for a group-based major practical in the third year with a series of professional issues lectures by industrial lecturers. Assessment of both of these was difficult by traditional means; as a result they are now jointly organised. Professional issues lectures which deal with real world issues, group working and transferable skills are assessed by means of a 250-word report. The students are allocated to groups of 8 or 10, and each of these groups must submit at least four reports during the lecture series which summarise the content of the lectures and are relevant to the group project they are to undertake in the following term.

At the end of the lecture series they submit a group report outlining how the group proposes to organise itself to achieve the (as yet unstated) goals of the system design project. This workplan is used to enable monitoring of the group at later stages. Each group is supervised by a member of staff who cannot give technical support. Other members of staff act as consultants paid from the group's budget.

The project is a role-playing exercise, with all stages of the process forming part of the assessment, including group management reports and a product proposal/feasibility study. In addition, groups are assessed by external assessors on the final technical and product presentations. Groups are marked by their supervisor and a moderator, with individual marks also taken from group self-assessment which weighs each person's contribution. Non-technical contribution is emphasised here. Individuals may also submit minority reports which suggest a higher weighting for somebody else. These weightings may be moderated by the supervisor, but are usually used directly.

Start date: Summer 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 100

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Database entry ref: 21

6 1
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Using Project Management Software to Support and Direct Group Projects

This module is the second phase of a two part course in project management in an IT environment. To consolidate the theoretical work and methodologies taught in the first semester, the students complete a live project in groups of three and four over a twelve week period, using the project management methodology PRINCE to monitor and control the conduct of the project. Potential projects were identified via a number of channels including the University's Enterprise Development Unit.

Each project team was given details of the projects available and could bid for their preferred project. The PRINCE method has provision for a project support office (PSO) to assist project teams in the management of their activities and one 'project' was to run this. Teams were then given a two-week period to visit their clients and come up with outline plans, which had to be approved by the directing staff and the client before the project was allowed to progress, with the PSO then acting as the monitoring agency. Through the 'exception reports' generated whenever there was a significant deviation from plans, the directing staff kept track of each team's progress and could intervene where appropriate. Each team's final report contained a portfolio of their project management products and an assessment of the overall work by the clients. Each team member also submitted an individual report covering their personal experiences of the project and each team could request marks to be scaled between team members to reflect varying contributions.

In general PRINCE gave students a very good 'route map' of how to go about setting up and running a project, while also enabling staff to supervise progress and assess performance. The method also proved to be an effective check on clients overloading or exploiting students.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 40

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Database entry ref: 149

Using Group Case Reports in Medical Microbiology

This was introduced to the third-year Medical Microbiology course for Medical students who, in St Andrews, take a three-year BSc (Medical Science) degree before proceeding to Manchester University for their clinical studies. Its introduction was in response to some of the recent recommendations of the General Medical Council with respect to medical teaching.

In four-hour sessions, students work in groups of three on around 20 case reports per session. The reports, where appropriate, are supplemented with, e.g. culture plates, stained slides, colour photographs displaying typical symptomologies, or the results of specific tests as an aid to diagnosis. For each case, groups are asked to produce two copies of answers to specific questions posed in relation to, e.g. presumptive diagnosis, causative organism(s), disease spread and development, complications of disease, treatment and prevention. At an appropriate time, one copy of each group's answers is collected for staff assessment and immediately thereafter, a workshop/discussion session is held. Each case and each answer is dealt with in depth, with the student groups leading the discussion. This treatment gives the students immediate feedback on both knowledge and understanding.

The students' three-hour degree examination consists of around 70 short answer questions. The introduction of these sessions has broadened the type of questions which can be used.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☐ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☑ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☑ the institution
- ☑ other institutions

No. of students affected: 100

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Database entry ref: 103

Assessment of Students' Seminar Performance

Most courses are assessed on a 50:50 coursework:examination basis. However, the coursework largely consists of essays or case study reports. Seminars are a compulsory part of the course, but no formal weight has hitherto been given to student work in them.

In this initiative, 10% of the coursework assessment is awarded for work due over the whole semester in seminars. This was done partly because the course is validated by the Institute of Personnel and Development who require development and assessment of skills. But it was also introduced in recognition of the fact that seminars allow different skills and qualities to be displayed by students and these are as valuable as the written skills assessed in essays.

Tutors therefore have to record on a weekly basis information on student performance which accumulates over the entire semester and allows tutors to write an assessment of strengths and weaknesses displayed by students and grade these. Tutors are observing the extent to which students come to seminars prepared, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the material under consideration, are able to work in small groups, chair sessions, report back to the class as a whole and contribute in class discussions.

Start date: Spring 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 400

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Database entry ref: 90

Assessing Other Skills

Skills for Retrieving and Communicating Chemical Information, with Peer Review

Although we teach transferable skills throughout the undergraduate course, we identified an advantage in also having a module specifically given over to the development of these skills. The module runs in the third term of the third year, with a total time commitment of 100 hours, and comprises the following eight exercises:

- Analysis of a scientific paper
- Computer skills for chemical presentations and reports
- Retrieval and review of chemical information
- Use of computerised databases
- A short talk on a written-up experiment
- A research planning exercise
- A recruitment interviewing exercise
- A poster presentation based on The Guardian Science Page

There is no formal module mark brought forward: the intention is rather to encourage students to participate and to discover their own strengths and weaknesses. The work produced is however evaluated by means of peer assessment, which gives valuable feedback to the students, and is also a mechanism by which we ensure adequate participation to allow us to award the module credit.

The emphasis of the module is therefore on the teaching and learning content rather than on assessment. Nevertheless the use of peer review is a particularly striking feature of the initiative, as is the principle of including a module for which no formal mark is generated. The latter has much to commend it at a time when students are regularly and/or continuously assessed and examined throughout their undergraduate courses.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 45

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Database entry ref: 89

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Laboratory Work: An Integrated Approach to Learning and Assessment in Science Courses

This initiative, part of a wider programme of curriculum change, sought to improve various aspects of laboratory work in Chemistry, Physics and Biosciences:

- the sequenced introduction of higher level tasks
- the integration and application of specialist knowledge and skills
- the development and assessment of transferable skills (e.g. communication, IT, group work, task management)
- maximisation of opportunities for student-centred learning.

The traditional practice of tying laboratory work to lecture courses was therefore abandoned in favour of an integrated approach. Over the whole programme of laboratory work (700 hours of student contact over four years), tasks of increasing complexity are introduced in a phased manner and the assessment strategy is designed to ensure that competence in all key areas is evaluated.

The range of assessment strategies used includes: inspection of student lab records; oral presentation and defence of selected lab records; assessment of a fully written up report based on the lab record; peer assessment of group exercises; poster presentation of project work; and industry-generated projects, in which the industrial supervisors contribute to the assessment process. Marks are also awarded by the laboratory supervisor for general professional conduct and for initiative in open-ended exercises and projects. Proformas and other guidelines are extensively used by staff for assessment purposes to ensure consistency of approach between difference assessors. Individual student profiles can be obtained from the cumulative assessment record for a given year of the courses.

Start date: Autumn 1990

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: c.350

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Database entry ref: 245

Mathematical Skills Transfer within Undergraduate Programmes

Many students who take mathematics as a service subject experience great difficulty in applying their mathematical skills in a problem solving context or in the context of another discipline. A potential source of difficulty is that in such tasks students are not being asked to exhibit their own creativity. To enable students to tackle such tasks successfully they need more experience in question posing.

In the 1993-94 session a small experiment was tried with a first year class. Five tasks were devised for these students to work in groups of three or four outside the formal lecture and tutorial hours. The problems and methods of investigation were deliberately unspecified. At the weekly tutorial meeting the groups were asked to record their findings in the form of a poster, thus forcing them to highlight the key issues/ results of their work. Some students responded well to this method of working, others resented it as they disliked being given extra tasks which distracted them from their 'ordinary work'. Nonetheless sufficient experience was gained to encourage us to develop the teaching/learning approach further.

We have now developed eight coursework tasks to enable students to think mathematically in the non-standard problem contexts. These tasks are assessed. The pattern of working is similar to the pilot study, with small groups working on the task and reporting to the tutorial meeting but with the addition of each group preparing a written report on the task which is assessed. Individual members of a group take part in peer assessment so that each can be allocated an individual mark for the task. Mathematical skills and facts continue to be examined in the traditional way but in a shortened examination paper. To avoid problems with over-assessment and to provide an appropriate balance, the weighting of the assessment is 30% coursework tasks, 70% objective tests. The standard of students' work and their attitudes to the problem-solving tasks is carefully monitored.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 150

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Database entry ref: 4

Writing Workshops in Scottish History

The underlying premise of the Writing Workshops in the Department of Scottish History is to teach students not only general writing skills and methodology, but also, and just as importantly, how to continue developing their skills independently, so that their writing skills will match the increasing sophistication of the material they encounter as they progress in both their academic and, latterly, professional careers.

The organisation of the programme is as follows. In the first term of the 1994/5 academic year, a lecture on general writing skills and expectations was given to first year students and a similar lecture, though focusing on writing longer pieces of work, was given to second year students. Increasingly limited space in the lecture schedule, however, has meant that this information is now delivered, as it had been previously, in a voluntary group workshop on a Wednesday afternoon. This year, an additional general group session was introduced in second term in order to cater to the large numbers of non-graduating students joining the course. Interestingly, there was also a significant number of continuing students who attended.

The next phase of the Writing Workshop Programme was then to make available to students individual sessions with the Writing Tutor to work on their individual needs. All Writing Workshops are completely voluntary and students are able to use the Writing Workshops as much or as little as they like. They are encouraged to use the programme at any point in the writing process whatsoever: thus, the assistance which they are able to obtain ranges from learning how to analyse an essay question to discussion of a completed rough draft. It is important to note that no comment would be made on the content of the essay; that is, students would be given assistance, for example, with grammar, structure, development of argument, methodology or even style. The session, therefore, is focused on showing students how to develop their interpretation, regardless of whether it is the 'correct' answer or not.

Start date: Spring 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 283

Team-based Mini-projects on Research Design

The aim of this initiative was to improve the representativeness of the sample of objectives assessed on a Research Design course in Speech and Language Therapy. Hitherto the main approach had been a three-question, three hour paper at the end of the course, with some adventitious assessment of students' research skills via the Honours Project (counted as a separate component of the BSc course).

Changes in the nature of the projects and the inevitable generality and shortness of the paper meant that skills in planning medium to large scale projects, data acquisition and reduction were no longer being adequately assessed. To address this problem the "mini-project" was devised. The opportunity was taken to include a further dimension, that of working in a research team and producing the results as a potentially publishable paper. This was deemed to increase the relevance of the course and the assessment.

The students are in the fourth year of an Honours course in Speech and Language Therapy. Research runs as a 20-hour component in term 3 of Third Year and a further 20 hours in the first term of Fourth Year. About half-way through the Fourth Year component students are given a research problem (e.g. public transport needs of the student body; dietary habits of undergraduate students) requiring substantial data gathering and analysis. Initial discussions involving the tutor result in the negotiation of a formal assessment rubric. Students are required to work as research teams, minimum size around four or five, and to design questionnaires, sampling procedures etc. as appropriate, gather data in the field, 'analyze' it and produce a formal paper. The rubric includes fairly detailed criteria for marking and grading.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 10

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Database entry ref: 224

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European Human Rights Project

The Senior Honours project seeks to develop transferable skills as well as knowledge and understanding of European Convention jurisprudence. The skills concerned involved students taking responsibility for their own learning and developing self-study, research and communication skills and various work skills (including sharing and exploiting individual resources and project management). Two teams of five students research and prepare a fictitious case (one team acting for the applicant, the other for the 'government') and produce written pleadings. After a preliminary oral presentation before a 'Commission' (of last year's participants), the students present oral arguments before lawyers working at the Council of Europe. The second stage involves students assessing their individual, group and comparative performances over a two-day period (spent in a residential setting).

The project has achieved its initial objectives and has shown that learning through group work at Honours level can be highly effective in generating knowledge, understanding and critical and analytical abilities in a way not always achieved through traditional methods. As a by-product, many of the skills applied will be of importance in later professional life to employers. The 'academic' - 'vocational' divide can be bridged. Student response to the project has been highly supportive. Initial scepticism has been replaced by enthusiasm and a desire to disseminate the advantages of such coursework, with participants keen to suggest that group projects become a standard (if also limited) part of Honours study.

If the development of certain individual qualities can indeed be furthered by student-led group interaction of the kind described, conviction as to the ends should help overcome anxieties as to the methods of teaching and assessment adopted.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 10

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Database entry ref: 232

Assessing of Community Enterprise Modules Based on Work in the Voluntary Sector

"Community Enterprise" is a level II elective module which gives students from all disciplines an opportunity to gain academic credit while undertaking work in the voluntary sector. The aims of the module are to develop students' personal skills, and to enable them to test their theoretical understanding in a real life setting. The module is assessed in a variety of ways. When they embark on the module, students are helped to draw up a learning contract which lists academic, personal and placement related objectives. The contract is agreed with Napier Enterprise and academic staff, and with the community partners. 60% of the overall module mark is awarded for a personal log which is assessed by staff. Logs are structured, with prompts to reflection and integration of experience and theory built-in week by week. Completed logs are rated on students' success in achieving learning objectives and integrating theoretical input with placement experiences.

A further 20% of assessment comes from peer assessment of individual oral presentations at the end of the module. Students are helped to prepare for the presentations and are briefed on the assessment criteria. The remaining 20% of marks are provided by the community partners who receive some guidance before assessing the student, since early experiences suggested that the enthusiasm of community partners for the help that they received from their students led to extremely high ratings on their part, and insufficient discrimination between students. To assist in their personal development, students complete self assessment checklists at the beginning and end of the module.

A second elective module has also been developed. This will enable students to carry out a Community Enterprise module based on a real need identified by a community organisation. Assessment of this module is by means of a project report and an oral presentation.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 41

78 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assessment of Students' Entrepreneurial Skills

By the end of the Retail Enterp[illegible] module, students should be able to plan, operate, monitor and evaluate the performance of a retail enterprise of their choice. Students have to raise share capital, set up financial systems and make an effective contribution in an appropriate managerial position to the business and at the end of the period of trading, liquidate the enterprise. They should also be able to communicate effectively with appropriate internal and external bodies. In short, students in groups of ten choose the type of retail company they want to set up and the products they think will sell to their target audience. The module is run in conjunction with Young Enterprise Scotland and they provide the legal framework for setting up a company.

Students throughout have the opportunity to take guidance from industrial advisors, who are invited to attend the first meeting. The 'shops' are open to the public, university staff and students for the last six weeks of the semester prior to Christmas. The module is student-led, based on a problem-based learning model.

Assessment of this type of module is complex and consists of both group and individual assignments commencing with submission of the business plan (group); the issuing of an annual report at the annual General Meeting (group); individual presentation of roles and responsibilities in the enterprise; and submission of a learning diary, summary report and self and peer assessments. The presentations and the annual reports are marked by external industrial advisors as well as being tutor-marked. The advisors are invited to the AGM as well as all shareholders and here they have the opportunity to question students about the business and about what they have learned as individuals.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 20-40

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Database entry ref: 241

Using Computing and Information Technology in Assessment

Internet Information Gatekeeper Project

This initiative entails a collaborative effort between two sets of students whose paths would not normally cross. The objective is to provide students with experience of using the network throughout their course. As part of an optional module on Computer-Mediated Communication third year students are commissioned to find information on a particular topic on behalf of first year students, who act as their clients. For the third year students, it offers a practical way of using the Internet for a real task whilst encouraging them to critically analyse and evaluate Internet sources and tools. For the first year students, it offers an incentive for using email as a communication tool whilst being encouraged to offer constructive criticism of the information retrieval skills of third year students.

The third year students decide on the subject area they wish to research, providing that it is within the area of Communication Studies. The third year students normally work in ten groups of three people and the first year has five seminar groups each of fifteen/sixteen people. The third year students are required to 'trawl' the Internet using appropriate tools to gather the information in accordance with the requirements of their first year 'clients'. The first year students are required to discuss the material supplied by the third year students and its adequacy, in a conference.

Third year students are asked to produce a report on information gathering using various tools on the Internet and the value of the tools for the particular project as well as the value of the sources they have located. They are also required to list the full directory of their discussions. This assignment counts for one twelfth of the total degree mark. First year students are assessed on their appraisal of the work done by the third year students. This is carried out via email questionnaires and students are required to supply comments rather than yes/no answers. The assignment does not count towards the final degree mark but must be passed as part of the course requirement.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [x] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 110

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Database entry ref: 140

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Assessing Group Activities Using Email, Internet and World Wide Web

Research in biological sciences is increasingly dependent upon use of electronic data retrieval and communications. One of the Molecular Cell Biology course aims is to develop research skills in its students, and so use of email, Internet and the World Wide Web has become one of our teaching tools. Students work in groups of four. They are sent their two projects by email and return their 'reports' by the same route. Each group receives a unique, although related, project, and submitting reports is mandatory for each student. The two projects are a) searching the BIDS bibliographic database at Bath for a research paper and then answering questions based upon it, and b) finding a particular protein sequence in the Swissprot database at Geneva (accessed via WWW) and answering questions about it. The problem with the brief reports is that the identity of the writer is uncertain, and thus awarding marks (10% of the total for the course is assigned to each of the projects) is fraught with difficulties.

As a consequence of this, we have adopted a mini-exam format to test each student's knowledge and understanding of the projects. Screendumps are made from selected stages of a BIDS and Swissprot search and students questioned about them (e.g. 'what would you do next?'). They are also shown results of searches of the databases and asked to interpret them, using questions similar to those that they had been given in their project. These short-answer questions are very easy to mark, although quite difficult to set.

This style of examination is an extension of that used to test knowledge and understanding of two other components of the course, labs and research data analysis, and has been found to be attractive to both staff and students.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 120

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Database entry ref: 26

Email to Support Peer Assessment in Student Teacher Training

This is an 'open book' assessment for student teachers taking a postgraduate qualification on Computing in Scottish secondary education. Questions on course content are made available on the electronic network and students are expected to post their extended written answers via the network. The assessment is cross-marked by students and sampled by tutors. This helps students identify areas of weakness in their knowledge of computing, to allow students to experience the responsibilities involved in grading other peoples' work and evaluate their own professionalism in such a task. The procedures adopted are as follows:

- On a specific date, a Questions file is placed on the FirstClass network. Students are requested to access the file to see the questions and print them off if they wish. They are then invited to make sure that they understand the topics referred to in the questions and that they can provide answers for all of them. A booklist is provided as support material.
- On a specific date, they must ensure that they have placed a file of their answers on the same area of the network. The system handles student identities.
- Immediately after this date, a Markers file is placed in the same network location. This allocates each student as a marker to a class colleague. This is not a 'pairs' arrangement. Students are asked to check as soon as possible whose answers they will be marking and download the appropriate set of answers.
- On the following date, a Solutions file containing answers which highlight the main points, is placed by the lecturer on the network. Students are given class time on that date to mark scripts. A tutor is on hand to resolve contentious issues.
- Marked scripts are submitted at the end of class. A selection of scripts are checked by lecturers, both in terms of the answers and the marking.

Start date: Summer 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 164

Use of Computers in the Assessment of a Thermofluids Engineering Course

Generally, engineering involves lengthy calculations and, more often than not, students perceive the objectives of engineering as the successful completion of these calculations. The real objectives of course, however, are the critical appraisal of an answer or the assessment of an engineering situation in terms of data for use in calculations. This objective can rarely be achieved in the limited duration of an examination.

Against this background, a course of study that used mathematical software was conceived and presented. The mathematical software presented the calculations in a format and layout that was similar to that of a hand calculation. Once conceived and validated, the student could then use the software to study the effect of varying parameters and make judgements on the validity of the data and solution, confident in the knowledge that the answer would be numerically correct and without the time penalty of performing the calculation by hand.

The exercise was taken to its logical conclusion by introducing this technology into the final examination. Agreement with the students and the course co-ordinator was reached. Concern was expressed over the effect on students whose computing skills were less developed and this is an area that requires further study. Similarly, more research is needed into the exam and the objectives. Generally, the teaching method, course content and exam were well received by the students and assessment marks were similar to previous years.

Start date: Spring 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 70

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Database entry ref: 137

Automated Assignment Collection in Computing Science

Assignment-collection uses a standard suite of software to handle assignments which are being done by students on suitably-networked machines. When this system is used, students do not hand-in assignments: instead, they leave their assignment work in files which are 'collected' by the software. In outline, the system works as follows.

The system is table-driven: every time it is run, it reads a file (the 'driver' file) prepared by the unit's coordinator, which gives a list of student usernames and a list of file (and directory) names. The filenames are those of the files in which students will be required to leave the components of their assignments. Associated with each student username is a set of three dates. The first of these is the 'seeding' date when the system places dummy versions of the named files in a new directory in the filespace of the student. The protections of the files are such as to allow read/write to the student and read to the coordinator, but no-one else. The student is sent a mail message about the new files, and a note is made in a log of the run. Thereafter, all the student has to do is to change the files which were 'seeded' by the coordinator to versions which are to be 'handed-in' for marking. The student is free to do the work where he/she likes: either working directly on the seeded files, or working elsewhere and copying the files before the collection-date. The second is the 'counting-down' date which is an interim check on the student's progress and thirdly the 'collection' date or the deadline for handing in the completed assignment.

In the description of the system which is given in the assignment handout, it is made clear to students that they must check their mail messages: if they do not get any, or the messages appear wrong or confusing, they must come and see the coordinator. Similarly, they can be given an extension or late collection (at the standard penalty) if they arrange it with the coordinator. The onus is thus on the students to check that the system is set up correctly for them, but they are given (more than) enough information to enable them to verify that all is well.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 67

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Database entry ref: 67

Continuous Assessment of Geography Classes Taught in Computer Laboratories

A class in computer applications for geographers had been taught and examined in a more traditional way, using an end-of-semester two hour examination. For a number of reasons this proved unsuitable for the course, and availability of a large computer laboratory and the necessary Windows software made possible a redesign of the course.

Under the new means of assessment, students were required to submit four projects based entirely on computer skills (graphical presentation, spreadsheets, simple Geographical Information Systems and advanced word processing). Each project was worth 20 marks, giving a class maximum of 80. This maximum mark was fixed after some experimentation with various scaling mechanisms. The purpose was to ensure that a total mark obtained from this class did not overweight the curriculum aggregate mark. Most conventionally marked examinations rarely produce marks over 75%. Thus a maximum possible mark of 80 for the computer class was not considered out-of-line with other classes.

A full explanation of the marking scheme is given to the students at the start of the class. This information is provided in both written and oral form. Student satisfaction with the class has been assessed by questionnaires and, apart from some discontent with a maximum mark of 80, the response has been good.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 40

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Database entry ref: 268

Automated Assessment of Functional Programs Using Ceilidh

The 'Ceilidh' system has been developed at Nottingham University for the automatic assessment of students' 'C' programs. As part of the TLTP 'Ceilidh' project we have developed a Standard Machine Language course under 'Ceilidh'.

Students submit programs in answer to exercises. The system runs their answer against test data and compares the results with those from a specimen answer. Students specify a type for their answer which is compared with that of the specimen answer. The system also checks their programming style and makes suggestions for improvement. System use is initiated interactively in the student's own time. They receive direct feedback and may correct and resubmit their answers as often as they like. The system enabled regular monitoring of student use and identification of those with difficulties.

We estimate that in 1993/94 we saved over 100 hours of hand marking, freeing staff to give one-to-one help to individual students. The system is augmented with a full set of lecture notes and OHP slides which students may access.

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 65

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Database entry ref: 29

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Projects Using Mathematical MacTutor Software

We have used project work with first and second year students at St. Andrews. In each teaching module (spread over a semester) we have set three projects. Each was designed to occupy students for three hours at the rate of an hour a week.

At first year level the class was introduced to the project during the first hour, shown the facilities in MacTutor available for working on it and some of the mathematical background to it. The following two weeks were used by students to work on it, either on their own or in groups. At the end of this period they wrote a short report (about two A4 pages) on what they had done and what they had learnt. The latter two sessions in the microlab were supervised by research students. At second year level, only the first of the three sessions was supervised.

The research students who supervised the sessions marked the projects which together counted as 10% of the assessment for each module.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: c.300

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Database entry ref: 118

Summative Competence-Based Assessment

The BSc Electrical Engineering course is designed to produce Higher Technicians as defined by the I.E.E. As such, it is imperative that the students can both display a substantial grounding in the theory of the subjects, and are also competent in the application in the appropriate field, by building skills and demonstrating them.

The approach taken is to design the practical sessions such that the required skills build upon each other, starting with simple environmental familiarisation, adding a more complex facet each session, and ending with a summative assessment which comprises the entire set of learnt skills. The particular modules where these methods are applied are:

- "C" Programming, using the PC-CEILIDH self-checking environment (pioneered by Nottingham University)
- Digital Communications, using a group-based "mini project" on LAN analysis
- Microprocessors, using XRAY development environment for 68000 units
- Diagnostic Engineering, using 68000 emulation techniques for Logic Analyser competence

The result is a clear and unambiguous measure of the competence of the individual, allowing corrective feedback to be provided. At a higher level, by looking across the assessed population, common problems clearly show up and can be fed back into the course as areas which must be addressed better.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 120

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Database entry ref: 174

89 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Objective Tests in Formative and Summative Computer-Assisted Assessment

This project, which was initiated in April 1995 and will run until February 1997, is divided into two parts. The first element is concerned with the development of guidelines and training materials to aid staff in setting and implementing objective tests in their courses using Question Mark Designer for Windows. The second element of the project involves the development and implementation of objective tests for formative self-assessment tests and summative examinations in two first- and one second-year Geography modules at Aberdeen, using computer-assisted assessment (CAA).

The outcome of the guidelines and training materials will enable a member of staff to define the formative and summative assessment for a course, while also identifying the place of objective tests within this assessment; design effective assessment questions in order to set and execute a formative or summative test; and adopt an appropriate marking strategy and evaluate the results of the CAA test.

Start date: not yet implemented

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☐ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected:

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Database entry ref: 197

Using Bar-Coded Labels to Process Marks and Automate Anonymous Marking Procedures

"Barmark" is a program which enables rapid and virtually error-free scanning of marks from script books, reports or other assessed work into a computer for subsequent processing by a spreadsheet.

Each student is provided with a set of sticky labels that have his/her matriculation number printed as a barcode, along with some other information. A label is attached to each item of work handed in for assessment. After marking is complete the matriculation numbers and the marks awarded are scanned into "Barmark". A data file which contains the students' names, matriculation numbers and each mark awarded is produced, and imported into a spreadsheet for the calculation of final marks, allocations of grades, production of pass/fail/oral lists, class statistics etc. Anonymous marking is implemented by using labels that do not show the students' names. Measures for data security, error-trapping and on-line help are incorporated into the program.

Using barcodes in this way eliminated keyboard errors and errors that may be expected to occur with manual transcription of lists of marks, assures that the correct student is credited with the correct mark whether anonymous marking is used or not, and reduces very significantly the time required for processing marks. We have found it extremely useful in handling for example the examination marks from very large classes (300+ candidates), and we now use this system for all courses run in the Department. It is also being used for other courses in the Medical Faculty and the Biology Teaching Organisation at Edinburgh and has been implemented at Dundee and Birmingham Universities.

Start date: Autumn 1991

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 1000

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Database entry ref: 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Machine Marking of Multiple-Choice Tests in an Introductory Psychology Course

A commercially available OMR (optical mark reading) system was adapted to score multiple-choice tests and examinations taken by students in the first year of the Psychology course at Stirling University. Over the course of the academic year they take seven such tests. About 300 students' work is now being processed in this way.

The system used is 'Markscan' and runs on a BBC computer. Data about students' answers are initially captured by an OMR scanner. This information is then transported to Beebug's 'Masterfile' database for storage and use in subsequent grading. The database performs the arithmetical functions and provides reports. Response cards have to be hand-fed and corrected. Notification of results can still be provided within an hour of the class completing a test.

The system has been operating successfully for six years. The main problems centre on inadequate pencil-marking of the response cards by the students. Faint writing and poor erasure of unintended marks are common faults. Adoption of one student's personal identification number by another is the most troublesome error. The method is simple and reliable, however. It reduces administration time considerably and cuts out scorer error. More recent systems using A4 stationery and automatic feeders should be faster still.

Start date: Autumn 1989

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 300

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Database entry ref: 83

Involving Students and Others in Assessment

Self-Assessment in Postgraduate Art and Design

This initiative involves the adoption of a simple form which identifies key areas for students to critically evaluate their own progress before a progress review assessment.

This places the initial responsibility with the student and requires them to look at their own progress in a pro-active manner. Staff can then assess the students' understanding of their progress and are more easily able to focus advice and or criticism. Furthermore, students begin to learn how to learn rather than waiting for staff to solve their questions for them.

The resultant work is honest, personal and produced from a position of confidence.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☑ the department
- ☑ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 10-14

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Database entry ref: 206

94 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Student Self-Assessment as an Aid to Marking Assignments

This was a purely informal assessment initiative, used as a means of enlivening the assessment process for the students and the staff. The aim was to include student input and introduce an element of self assessment into essay writing.

The initiative involves students on a third year course which runs for a whole year. Two essays are required for the course. The element of self-assessment encourages effort on both of the essays demanded by the course, although only one is required as the continuous assessment mark contributing 25% of the overall assessment for the course. If students score highly on the first essay there is often less incentive to work towards a high mark in the second essay. The initiative is purely informal, and requires no forms. The use of forms could be off-putting, especially for honours courses, where it may be viewed as a marks sheet. The students are told that, before they submit the essay, they should spend 15-30 minutes performing a self-assessment of the piece, outlining the major strengths and weaknesses, and should include this with the essay.

The outlines submitted by the students provide a basis for discussion in the tutorial, as well as providing the lecturer with a way into the essay. The outlines so far submitted have proved to be remarkably accurate in terms of the shortcomings of the essays. However, there is a reticence among UK students to highlight the strengths of their own work, unlike their counterparts from the US. Their self-appraisals add an extra dimension to the return of the essay, as the students receive feedback as well as their own comments, and provide them with a more self-critical approach to essay writing.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 148

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Assessment of Competency in Performance Appraisal and Development

The exercise was developed for a course in Personnel Management to assess students' competency in appraisal and development.

It requires students to develop and agree a set of criteria for assessing another student's work on the course and identify areas for development. The student is observed interviewing the student appraisee using the set of criteria developed and discussing developmental plans with the student. The decisions are recorded and submitted together with the students' assessment of their own performance against a set of performance criteria issued at the beginning of the exercise.

The exercise assesses the students' ability to develop, agree and use objective criteria for measuring work performance, together with interview skills which must be capable of managing at least one difficulty faced by the student appraisee. The exercise takes account of the students identifying their own areas of weakness in meeting the assessment criteria.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 203

96 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Structured Feedback with Limited Self-Assessment

This initiative was introduced within a first year European History Course by one tutor for marking coursework essays, though it has since been taken up by others. The aim is to encourage the students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and to serve as a basis for the oral discussion which also accompanies the return of the essays.

In 1993-94 a marking form was introduced which is returned to the student along with the essay. This provides students with findings indicating their main strengths and weaknesses in relation to four ideal qualities of an essay: knowledge, analysis, structure and presentation, together with ample space for other general comments. In 1994-95 this was followed by a self-assessment form returned by the student with the second essay of the year. The self-assessment form retains the focus on four main qualities, and invites students to comment on how they have sought to address, within the essay submitted, shortcomings identified in previously marked essays.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected:

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Database entry ref: 19

Self Assessment of Experiential Learning in Clinical Pharmacy

This initiative was developed to meet the need for a formative assessment tool for pharmacists studying in the workplace while gaining experience with patient care. The aim was to facilitate student learning and to provide a continuous record of communication between the student, the accredited clinical tutor and the university tutor.

Problem-based learning encourages a self-directed learning approach to clinical pharmacy and facilitates continuing self-development. Experiential learning in clinical specialities under the supervision of an experienced practitioner aims to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a clinical pharmacist. The MSc/Diploma course in Clinical Pharmacy aims to formally enable this development through a ten module taught course and Modules 3 and 4 provide experience of the clinical presentation and management of disease states focusing on the pharmacist's contribution during a continuous clinical attachment. In these two modules, students prepare for and participate in weekly multidisciplinary clinical ward rounds under the supervision of a network of accredited tutors. Students are challenged to use this experience to learn for themselves and to take responsibility for their own learning. The accredited tutor's role is to guide the student towards a disciplined approach to handling patient problems. Students use patient profile cards to document their practice and to facilitate discussion with their tutor.

To encourage purposeful meetings between tutor and student, guidelines are circulated together with a structured self-assessment form. However, there is a reluctance among our students to self-assess resulting in poor returns of forms. Further familiarisation in the philosophy behind self-assessment, and training in how to derive benefit from self-assessment are needed.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 284

Self-Evaluation by Students

I mark essays using a pro forma marking sheet. Before essays are returned to students, class time is set aside and students are asked to re-read clean copies of their essays. They evaluate their own essays using a similar pro forma to the one I use.

Time is set aside for individual meetings with students at which I ask them to tell me what they thought of their essay. I use this to open up a dialogue in which I bring in my own observations. My overall aim is to support students in their own study. Marked essays are returned during these individual meetings.

I do not ask students to submit their own evaluations. I encourage them to use them for their own purposes. On one course I negotiate class marks individually by reserving 25% of the marks for a component on "contribution to the class discussion". The quality of the contributions is discussed (non-evaluatively) with individual students and class marks are adjusted by agreement in the context of this discussion.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 62

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Database entry ref: 24

Peer Assessment of Emailed Assignments

The initiative was developed in response to a recent staff development initiative suggesting the value of peer assessment as a way of improving the depth of students' approaches to their learning. Students on both our Dundee and Aberdeen campuses following an optional course unit in Environmental Education were required to submit a 1500-word assignment for marking by their tutor and two of their peers. The assignments were submitted using electronic mail. Submission in this way ensures a confirmed submission time, i.e. date stamp.

Each student was emailed a marking grid based upon the assessment criteria. Using this grid each student marked two submissions. The tutor used these grids to produce a final mark. For each criterion a majority mark was given, i.e. two students and a tutor, one student and tutor, or two students. In the case of no agreement an average score was allocated.

The system allowed students and tutors in Aberdeen to quickly mark scripts from Dundee and vice versa. Marking did, however, take longer than would have been the case if only one marker had been involved.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 26

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Database entry ref: 229

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Self- and Peer-Assessment of a Research Project

The initiative is a new way of assessing performance on a ten-week research project in which students work in teams of three or four, supervised by an academic. At the end of the project, students complete a form giving their assessments of their own and their research-team colleagues' contributions to several aspects of the project, such as:

- group discussion
- literature analysis
- planning experiments
- laboratory experiments
- data analysis
- originality
- general ability for team work

These forms are passed to the supervisor who takes the assessments into account in making his/her own assessment of each students' performance.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 191

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Group Poster Presentation

A group poster presentation exercise is used as part of the third year Core Biology module, which comprises five topics taught sequentially throughout the year. The module aims to encourage students to integrate the cell biology and physiology of these topics together. Students are randomly divided into groups of five or six and allocated one of the five topics as their subject area. Each group is given a challenge or case study which aims to encourage the integration of the cellular and physiological aspects of their topic. The groups are given five weeks in which to work on this project, outwith timetabled classes, and they are required to present their work in the form of a poster during a presentation session to both staff and students.

The presentation sessions are organised into a formal programme: following the viewing, the non-presenting groups discuss, compile and submit two questions for each of the poster presenting groups. However, the member of staff responsible for teaching the topic selects the best two questions and uses these as a trigger for discussion between the groups and the rest of the class. Afterwards, using a checklist, students in the class assess the groups' presentations on the basis of the poster design, content and the way in which they responded to questions. Staff also give each group feedback on how they might improve their presentations. The groups complete a peer group assessment form on the relative contributions of their group members towards the poster work, but not including themselves.

At the end of the year, all the posters are shown in a final exhibition to which the class and other departmental staff are invited. All those attending are asked to complete a checklist which asks for a relative ranking of posters in terms of design and content. After this exhibition, staff award the groups with their final mark, combining marks for poster design, level of scientific content, responses to questions and group work. The group work mark is taken from the peer group assessment form completed by the groups after their initial presentation session.

Start date: Autumn 1990

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 100

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Database entry ref: 9

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Peer Assessment in a Senior Honours Seminar

This course is for final-year French single and joint honours students and is intended to provide an opportunity to bring together the different components of their studies in French. A wide range of topics is covered, embracing literary, cultural, aesthetic, philosophical, social and political themes. Students are expected to research the material for the seminar, drawing upon experiences and ideas derived not just from their various French courses, but also from other courses they have followed, their wider reading and their experiences abroad. Critical, analytical and presentational skills which are also developed to an extent in other French courses are fully utilised in this seminar.

The seminar takes place weekly. In each two-hour seminar, two students each deliver 15-minute presentations based on cognate topics and are thereafter responsible for leading the discussion (also in French) for the remaining 40 minutes. The seminars are presided over by a staff member, but the organisation of the seminar is left entirely up to the students, who are encouraged to use audiovisual aids to complement their presentation, and enrich the ensuing discussion.

In the last ten minutes of the seminar, the entire group of students evaluates the presentations and discussions in terms of how well they met the stated criteria of the seminar (i.e. organisation of material, timing of delivery, persuasiveness of argument, interaction with "audience"). Staff may contribute any comments at this point, but the essential evaluation is that provided by the students themselves. This assessment is informal in the sense that it does not contribute towards a student's final degree assessment. The formal assessment is in the essay finals paper, which draws upon their presentational skills and ability to think laterally.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 40

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Database entry ref: 226

Developing Student Skills through Supervised Group Projects

This initiative focused around replacement of traditional tutorials for first-year students with group projects designed to stimulate enthusiasm, develop teamwork and organisational skills, and involve collective comment, discussion and criticism in addition to more traditional essay-writing skills. Students signed up for particular projects in groups of six, and over a 10-week period worked on a collective project. In the first semester, this involves a group report to which all students contribute one 1000-word chapter, knitted together with a collective introduction, cross-referencing, conclusion and consolidated reference list. In the second semester, the group output is a poster presentation involving the analysis and depiction of appropriate data.

For both projects, each group must give an oral presentation of their collective work to a peer group and staff. The members of the peer group (who have completed an entirely different project) are invited to comment on the content and presentation. In the first semester project such commentary is heuristic: assessment is based entirely on the written report, with two-thirds of the assessment being based on individual (chapter) contributions and one-third on the collective report. In the second semester, however, peer-group comments are taken into account by staff, who assess both the quality of the poster and its oral presentation.

In each semester, the group work accounts for one-third of total assessment, the remainder being through conventional essays, practical and field classes, and a multiple-mode examination.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 307

Peer Assessment of a Desktop Publishing Assignment

Desk-top publishing, at the early stages of teaching, is very difficult to assess objectively. It is essential to avoid giving high marks to students who have a natural flair for design, and penalising those without artistic ability. Therefore, it is necessary to have a detailed and objective marking scheme so that the student's use of the functions of the program and understanding of the aims of the assessment can be measured. However, this does mean that such a marking scheme can be used by students for peer assessment just as well as by staff. It is also a subject where, since there is no 'one correct solution' the students sometimes feel rather lost, and it it is very useful for them to analyse the work of others according to specific criteria. In practice, the first assessment is held fairly early on in the course, so that feedback is most useful.

- A very simple document, e.g. a one-page poster, is presented by each student.
- They are asked to make sure that their name, course etc, is on a separate sheet of paper.
- Using the class list, each student is given a code number.
- This number is put on the student's work , which then has three more copies made. (This is easiest if they are all on A4 paper).
- The work from each class is collated into lots of bundles of four different posters.
- On the day of the peer assessment exercise, the students are each given a bundle from another class (if there are enough classes participating) and four copies of the marking scheme.
- The exercise is treated as en examination, with examination conditions applying as far as possible.

They usually have very little trouble with the marking and some take a great deal of care, writing extra comments on the sheets, which of course is additional feedback for the student who receives it. Occasionally, with 'non-standard' pieces of work, students will ask for guidance from the invigilating staff.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 120

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Database entry ref: 34

Student Peer Assessment of Seminar Presentations

In the Minorities in Multicultural Society course, all students are required to make seminar presentations. The students are invited to assess the quality of each presentation and to give feedback to each presenter, making use of a specially-designed evaluation pro forma which evaluates various aspects of delivery including content, clarity, pace, structure and use of visual aids.

Responses to the use of this pro forma suggest that in addition to expanding the range of feedback received by seminar presenters, those students listening to the presentation learned a great deal, through their evaluations, about what makes for a successful presentation. The inclusion in the pro forma of a question inviting students to identify what they had most learned from each seminar encouraged them to reflect on what they had heard but also proved to be a good way of initiating discussions.

Start date: Spring 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Database entry ref: 139

Student Assessment of the Practical Components of Assignments as an Aid to Marking

This initiative aims to give third year BEd students who opt for the specialist Studies in Mathematics the experience of setting and assessing problem solving tasks for children in the Primary School.

Over a period of five weeks in Term 1, students prepare and implement a short teaching programme designed to give children in the Middle School experience of problem solving. In the third and final session, the children make a poster which shows their steps to the solution. These posters become the focus for the discussion in the tutorial where the emphasis is on devising criteria to assess the original or adapted problem set by the student and the steps the children took finding a solution as illustrated by the poster.

Part of the summative assessment of Term Two requires students to devise a problem which they will use with children in the Upper stages and to submit a copy of the problem for peer group assessment. Working in pairs, students apply the criteria and assess several problems. These are coded to preserve anonymity. At the end of the exercise the advantages for the student are immediate feedback and an indication of the mark for the problem solving component. The advantages for the marker are principally in time-saving because the marking record for each student's problem shows the indicative grades and comments. Experience has shown that students are very critical and fair and value the comments of their peers.

Start date: Spring 1989

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30-40

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Database entry ref: 167

Peer Assessment of Student Presentations

The aim of this initiative is to ascertain whether the value of student presentations to the group as a whole is enhanced when peer assessment is used. Although student presentations are regarded as a valuable learning experience by the students giving the presentation, the rest of the group tends to regard a colleague's presentation as an inferior learning experience. Student attitudes to different types of learning activity are being assessed by a general quesionnaire.

The groups of students participating in peer assessment assess their colleagues' work according to defined criteria which have been discussed prior to the series of student presentations. The presentations are marked by each student in the group and by the tutor. At this stage of the initiative it is the tutor mark which will be recorded as the formal mark for the work. The average student marks in each category are compared with the tutor marks in order to assess the reliability of peer assessment.

A second questionnaire is intended to ascertain whether the students involved with peer assessment consider that the student presentations have been more valuable learning experiences. A sample of students will be interviewed.

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 110

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Database entry ref: 32

108 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Coursework Assessment and Peer Feedback in Two MSc. Modules

Two modules offered to three MSc. groups (hospitality, tourism and health care) have a strong element of human resources management and give a foundation to the study of service industry organisations, employee development and comparative analysis.

The primary student assessment is through a written 3,000 word essay/ report or portfolio based upon tutor questions (with some student negotiations). Students form syndicates to work through structured case studies, and guided readings (and course materials) provide a foundation to dip into. Diagnostic and formative feedback is given from syndicates (peers) and via the tutor. Ritual is observed as every member closes the session with five minutes comments on what they can offer to the group, from their understanding of the case involved.

Summative assessment follows a specimen outline (given out in the course materials) and is reflected in a marking sheet attached to completed work. Summary and developmental comments of a general nature are attached to final work to extend individual learning. Each student has ten minutes to consider the handed-back work in a session seven days after the work is submitted to the tutor. The tutor gives personal feedback and hears the student's comments. General feedback on overall performance is given. Students keep their work after the examination board process.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 12

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Database entry ref: 94

Peer Feedback and Peer Marking of Oral Presentations

In this scheme, which is applicable to both individual presentations and to those of groups, students assess and comment on the oral presentations of their peers. Preparation for the task of assessment is very important. When the assignment is first presented to students, they are informed that they are to carry out the assessment of the oral presentations. Before the first presentation, students are asked to identify the characteristics of a good presentation. A short list of relevant criteria, identified by the students, is compiled for use in assessing the presentations. Next, students are reminded of the marking bands in use and of a likely pattern of ultimate degree classifications (e.g. a relatively small number of first and third class degrees), in order to encourage "realistic" marking. After each presentation, peers complete the assessment form which asks them to identify the "Best Feature" of the presentation and to provide a suggestion for improving it. In addition, an overall mark is requested, taking into account the criteria previously identified. Written assessments are also made independently by the lecturer, using the same assessment form. Oral feedback, based on the written assessments, is given by students, and then by the lecturer, to each student (or group) immediately after the presentation.

The scheme provides students not only with a greater degree of help with marking than is often the case but also with feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of presentations. The strategy appears to have met with some success, although peer markers tended to be a little more generous than the lecturer. However, peer ratings were found to be reasonable indices of oral presentation skills.

The evaluation of the scheme suggested that peer feedback and marking was perceived by students as being an aid to learning. It was seen as more informative and more challenging than the traditional method of marking, and, understandably, much harder work for the students. However, students reported having become more critical and confident as a result of participation in the scheme.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 80

Self and Peer Assessment through Seminar Presentations

This initiative involved fourth-year students following a BSc Honours in Midwifery Programme. Each student gave a seminar presentation which was accompanied by self and peer assessment. Devised to strengthen formative assessment, the initiative aimed: to encourage and facilitate student assessment of their own and others' progress; to further develop analytical and evaluative skills; to dispel the phobia of disseminating their own work to professional colleagues and help in building self-confidence; to further develop skills in using professional database systems and audio-visual aids.

Each student was allowed to decide on a presentation date, and an agreed timing of 20-30 minutes presentation followed by presenter-led/ controlled discussion was mutually determined. An initial high level of anxiety gradually reduced with further discussion and clarification of the content of the assessment pro forma which was to be used and of the actual process of the assessment. Students could also call in to discuss their own concerns on a one-to-one basis. Preparation time and time for conducting the background search for the necessary information were negotiated and mutually agreed. By the respective dates of their presentations, students felt sufficiently in control to spontaneously invite junior colleagues at Level 3.

All members of the audience including the presenter were given a copy of the assessment pro forma, outlining the logical sequence of the assessment procedure. At the end of each presentation, presenters were allowed a few moments for personal reflection on their own performance followed by constructive comments from the audience.

Start date:

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 55

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Database entry ref: 306

Village-Based Study and Design Projects

Following staff discussions and professional input, it was decided to adopt a thematic background to the study and design projects in years 2, 3 and 4 by using 'village', 'town' and 'city' as core themes. In the second year, therefore, we used 'village' which, because of large student numbers, became two villages - Fala and Oldhamstocks.

Visits were arranged to allow studies to be produced of each village and for students to meet with villagers and their representatives. Further visits throughout the session were undertaken to study and select 'sites' for individual design work. Village representatives were invited to attend reviews and a Year End Exhibition for comments and feedback.

The students, either in groups or as individuals, presented their study or design work to a group of tutors and a village representative for comments and criticism. This added an extra dimension to the reviews by providing an informed view and insight that would not be possible by outsiders.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 37

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Database entry ref: 93

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Assessment of Clinical Clerkship in Psychiatry

During Phase III of their degree programme, medical students are attached to a psychiatry ward at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and related peripheral hospitals. Each student spends four weeks in one ward and three weeks in another to permit a spread of clinical experience and the aim of these attachments is to receive training in interview skills; taking psychiatric history; conducting mental state examinations; making formulation of a case and reaching an appropriate diagnosis. In addition, students are expected to attend hospital case conferences, the out-of-hours emergency clinic and as opportunity arises, to learn about specific aspects of psychiatry including forensic psychiatry, old-age psychiatry and to gain some insight into community psychiatric care. The assessment of students is carried out by the consultants to whose wards the students are attached, and the marks for the clerkships contribute 25% of the final degree examination. It is always difficult to assess clinical skills in a short space of time and there is a danger that marks will reflect the student's personality rather than underlying knowledge.

The assessment has been revised. Individual grades are requested on five key areas: (1) Taking psychiatric history; (2) Conducting mental state examinations; (3) Making a formulation and appropriate diagnosis; (4) Relationship with patients and sensitivity to their needs; and (5) General contributions to the work of the ward or unit. In addition, to encourage students to use the psychiatric library and to work up individual cases in depth, it is proposed that each student should orally present 2 cases to senior staff (usually at a ward round) and should also complete a written case summary in the course of their four week attachment. Attendance at hospital case conferences and the emergency clinic will be stated as a specific requirement of the attachment as these are thought to be important learning situations.

It is hoped that by this clearer statement of aims and objectives of the clinical clerkship, a fairer assessment will be reached.

Start date: Summer 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 197

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Database entry ref: 46

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Tests and Examinations

A Pub Quiz Approach to Class Tutorials

This has been prompted by the popularity of the pub quiz. A similar approach (though without beer and music) has been introduced within the 10 week module 'formal methods' in the way class tutorials are conducted.

The tutorial room furniture requires to be rearranged beforehand so that groups of approximately six or seven students can discuss questions separately. Students are free to join whichever group they wish. Groups are then named and asked to supply a commonly agreed answer to each question. Three sets of questions are devised, each set lasting 20 minutes and undertaken sequentially. The scores for the first two sets are given during the tutorial session, and the final marks announced electronically the next day. A set of correct solutions is made available progressively each week for individuals to consult.

The approach provides an extra dimension to learning a difficult topic; encourages student discussion where theory meets application; prepares students for more substantial groupwork; improves student attendance at tutorials; generates verbal and diagrammatic reasoning in small groups; introduces an informal and relaxed element of competition; complements a set of conventional tutorial problem sheets; deepens investigation within case studies featured in lectures and provides additional peer support within the context of the module.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 90

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Database entry ref: 61

Case-Based Tutorials and Exams in Clinical Pharmacology

The bulk of the teaching in Clinical Pharmacology in the fourth year of the MBChB course at Dundee University takes the form of case-based tutorials. At the beginning of the term students are given a booklet containing case histories and questions on patient management. Students are expected to discover the answers to these questions prior to attending tutorials. A staff version of the answers exists so that a unified agreed answer can be taught by all staff. Because the teaching is carried out in such a manner we felt that the more traditional forms of examination should be abandoned in favour of case based exams.

We have now introduced exemption examinations into the fourth-year course. The exam consists of four questions commencing with the history and a statement of the diagnosis. Thereafter the students are asked about the treatment, mode of action, adverse effects, etc. in the management of these diseases. Such a system has proved very popular with the students. Feedback forms are provided with each examination to collect data on the student opinion.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 120

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Database entry ref: 128

Enhanced Student Motivation and Performance through Tutorial Tests and Presentations

This initiative aimed to enhance poor student exam performance and modest enjoyment of the course. Attendance at tutorials had become so poor as to render these sessions virtually worthless; approximately 20% of the class were completing no more than 50% of tutorial questions set, hardly a recipe for producing good exam results. Changes in the way the course was delivered were necessary.

The most high-profile modification was the introduction of a programme of tutorial tests. Four of these tests were held during the two term course, each counting for 5% of the final mark and each being a single question based on one from the tutorial sheet. The net result was approximately 90% tutorial attendance, with all the students concerned attempting every tutorial question. Additionally, the tutorials were "spiced up" by having students give presentations of tutorial questions. These proved popular and humorous events for both the audience and the speakers.

Other elements of the initiative included marking of laboratory investigations before students left the laboratory area, which avoided post-lab write-ups and post-lab marking for the lecturer. Students were thus obliged to commit their views, comments and calculations to paper when these were uppermost in their minds. An improvement in write-up quality became apparent and students commented that this approach was a valuable vehicle for reinforcing lecture material. An industrial visit was also included, the technical substance of which formed part of the final exam. This proved a very well attended and enjoyable day out.

Feedback from the students indicated particular enthusiasm for the tutorial test system; it forced them to work steadily through the session, during which time they could see the marks earned visibly accumulate. A comparison of exam performance before and after the initiative was introduced revealed no evidence of students becoming overly reliant on coursework performance to pull them through the aggregate pass mark.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60

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Database entry ref: 181

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A Twenty-Four-Hour Essay

Students are set an essay topic to be written over a "24 hour waking period". The students are given a choice of two topics and may write a 3000 word essay on either, to be handed in by 5 p.m. of the second day. Word processed documents are encouraged but not required, and the assessment is worth 50 marks out of 800.

The two topics set are designed with the following criteria in mind:

- they are wide ranging synthesis topics that draw on a variety of sub-disciplines within Geology and Geophysics, so allowing a variety of reasoned approaches and styles of answer.
- they do not really rely heavily on the students retaining or accessing particular references but rather can be tackled using numerous reference sources. Part of the object of the exercise is to test student's skills at finding, digesting and synthesising diverse literature in a limited time framework and in a pressure situation.
- no student should have an *a priori* advantage gained from a particular option for which he/she has already studied: any advantage could only be gained through independent study.

The principal assessment objectives are to examine the abilities of students to develop arguments and coherent lines of reasoning on important geological issues. The pressure/timescale aspect is important as this gives students a foretaste of finals exams pressure. They have to be decisive, collect their thoughts and be well organised.

Start date: Summer 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☑ other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 74

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Department of Agriculture *University of Aberdeen*

Assessment of Data-Analysis Skills in Animal Science

This new assessment initiative was introduced to MSc level courses in Animal Science, in order to assess the data-analysis component of the course. This replaced a formal open-book examination in which students were required to solve a number of short data-analysis problems related to their field of study.

The new initiative involves assessment being carried out over a 30-hour period, in which students are given a simulated (or occasionally real) set of data from a relevant experiment, and asked to analyse the data and write a scientific report of the results, including a discussion. Each student is given a different problem. They are allowed to use computer software to complete the analysis if they wish, but are not obliged to do so. They are also permitted to consult the member of staff in charge during the assessment if they need to do so. The amount of assistance given is taken into account in allocating marks.

The reasons for changing the type of assessment were principally to relieve pressure at examination time and to achieve a more appropriate assessment of the skills required by a working animal scientist (e.g. interpretation of biological data). Both these aims have been achieved. It is very noticeable that the level of learning achieved by the students has changed from short-term revision to the deeper learning required for this problem-solving approach. This is reflected in greater independence and competence in the analysis of research project data later in the MSc course.

This initiative has been very successful in academic terms. It is, nevertheless, expensive in staff time, although this will become less so when a bank of problems has been accumulated.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 249

A Compulsory 'Seen' Problem on the Law of Contract

The degree examination in Contract Honours always contained a compulsory hypothetical in which students were required to give legal advice to a character in the problem. In 1993 I set this question separately from the degree examination, and put it on a 'seen' basis. The problem is issued to the students on the Monday of week 3 of the third term; they then sit it as a "blind" question on Friday, having meantime researched the answer to the problem. The question was slightly changed in various details, to ensure that students did not write down a memorised answer, but were compelled to reflect anew on the issues raised by the problem in general.

Start date: Summer 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 58

Unseen Questions on a Seen Case Study

This initiative was decided upon to enable students to handle a broad input of course material in a fifteen week module of twelve teaching weeks. The initiative involves students in Level 1 of a BA/BA (Hons) Linked Modular Programme (Applied Consumer Studies; Food Product Management; Retail Business) following a module entitled Nutrition and the Consumer. For some students it is a core module, whilst for others it is an elective one. Its aims are to examine the role of foods in meeting the health needs of consumers; to investigate the factors influencing household food choices and to promote an awareness of trends in food consumption patterns.

The module content is wide and varied covering basic nutrition and nutrition concepts, nutritional requirements of the consumer during their life-cycle and consumer food selection. Rather than just have the students learn the material by rote and regurgitate it for an unseen exam, the use of a seen case study - which sets a scene and conveys problems - means that students have to think more constructively about answering the unseen exam questions. The revised exam material is also not compartmentalised as it has to be applied to different individuals in different situations. There is also the element of problem solving attached to the use of the acquired knowledge.

Start date: Spring 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 25-40

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Database entry ref: 151

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Tests of Understanding to Supplement Coursework in Mathematics

Case studies or assignments which students work on in their own time over a period of a few weeks provide marvellous opportunities for students to see the relevance of their course material and to master it. However, particularly in a subject like Mathematics, some students often get help from others and an assessor can never be sure how much of the submission handed in is the individual's own work. In many cases, staff may even wish to encourage help seeking and cooperative working, provided each student ends up with a thorough grasp of the material.

This initiative, developed on a quantitative methods module in the Business School, gets the students to sit a test on their understanding of the assignment when it is complete. The test checks whether each student understands the methods used, why these methods were used, the implications of the results etc. and whether they can replicate or extend some of the parts of the solution. The test mark and the submitted work's mark are combined into a single final mark. If students have worked as a group, only one copy of the work is submitted, although each student needs a copy of the submission at hand when sitting the test.

The results are very encouraging. All students appear to learn the material in the assignment very thoroughly and to retain the knowledge. Weaker students, who might not have been able to get started on the work on their own, learn from their colleagues. Quick students who can 'do' the work, benefit from having to explain what they are doing and why, and are generally very supportive of weaker group members. Students consider the method a very fair way of assessing group work, and more in keeping with the spirit of group work than some other methods. Staff feel that the method produces results that are true reflections of individual's abilities and effort. The extra burden of a test mark is usually more than alleviated by the reduction in total scripts by some students choosing to work in groups; the test is usually designed for quick marking.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [x] other institutions

No. of students affected: 450

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Database entry ref: 2

Multiple Choice Testing in Financial Accounting

This was a formative assessment, introduced as an experiment. The course lecturers considered that aspects of the course (Accountancy 2/3: Financial Accounting) covered factual knowledge, for which multiple choice tests might be appropriate. We decided not to include questions in the formal summative assessment, but to hold a one hour test (two in the following year) comprising 20 questions. We also decided to adopt a generous marking scheme, not penalising incorrect answers. Our intention was to offer the students further feedback on their progress during the course (the test was held half way through the course, and in the second year towards the end). It was also an opportunity for the lecturers to iron out any problems setting and marking questions.

One important consequence of this two year experiment was the discovery that, despite the factual nature of some of the examinable knowledge, in some cases not all wrong answers were equally incorrect. This was particularly the case for computational work.

In view of the fact that there was already much formative assessment in the course, particularly through tutorial questions, the tests were discontinued. In the two years of the experiment the tests were taken by about two-thirds of the class of 65. Results were variable, appearing quite similar to what we are used to seeing for computational work. However, the limited feedback given to each student (his or her mark and a standard feedback sheet indicating the broad nature of each of the 20 questions and the numbers of the class getting it correct) was much less helpful than our other forms of feedback e.g. essay comments and tutorial solutions,

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected:

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Database entry ref: 76

Computer-Aided Self-Assessment in Organic Chemistry

Using "Question Mark" software, tests have been written to cover most of the second and third year Organic Chemistry course. The tests are mounted in an open-access computer suite and available twenty four hours a day. The students are told to test themselves with these tests to see if they have understood the appropriate lectures. The tests give feedback and direct students to their textbook. The tests are very graphical and usually involve selecting a particular reagent or reaction site.

One assignment per year is run using the same (or similar) tests to those that were available previously. This is to encourage repeated attempts at the tests.

Students tend to get very high marks for the computer assignment, which has therefore been quite popular. Knowledge is tested at quite a superficial level, however, the self-assessment aspect of the computer tests is very useful.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 266

Assessment of Managed Student-Centred Learning

This initiative focuses on bacterial microbiology in the Pharmaceutical Biology course. The change from three terms to two semesters, now in progress in the first year only, requires 17 hours of lectures to be replaced by 12 hours of lectures and 19 hours of 'managed student-centred learning' (MSCL). In order to assess the MSCL dimension by means of coursework (practicals and tutorials, etc) a series of tests were run. Formerly these were computer-based, but restricted access to the solutions was no longer feasible, so for security they are now all paper-based. The tests are shown in the following table:

week	*topic*	*nature of test*	*alternatives**	*nb*
1	Safety & Techniques	100 multi-choice	yes	follows 'techniques video' & first practical
2	Experimental Method	Student-devised experiment from limited information	no	"open book"
3	General Microbiology	Questionnaire during video	no	"open book"
4	General Microbiology	100 multi-choice	yes	"open book"

* for each of the three sections of 31 students

There was a general improvement in marks over the five weeks but the 'devise-it-themselves' test in week 2 was very disappointing. Students showed limited ability to 'think out' an experiment.

These results will require statistical analysis and comparison with previous years. The original computer-based tests have now been 'released' as part of the MSCL package. Eventually these tests will be computer-based when security of the solutions can be ensured and adequate hardware is available for these tests to be run during coursework.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 94

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Database entry ref: 211

125

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Criteria for Assessment of a One-Year Course in Orchestral Conducting

This assessment initiative was introduced in order to improve marking at the mid-session (internal departmental) assessment of conducting students. It sought to minimise subjective judgements and focus on objective elements, with a view to improved feedback to students in order to devise remedial strategies. The same assessment criteria were used in the final assessment of the conducting students with a view to helping external examiners to mark in a manner consistent with the aims of the course. Aspects of orchestral conducting, chosen from the course material, were listed on the mark sheet as follows:

Starting/stopping; establishing appropriate speed(s); giving a clear beat; giving leads; indicating dynamics; indicating change of speed; indicating shaping of phrases; aural awareness; communication/giving clear instructions; vocal illustration; rapport with players; eye contact with player; knowledge of score; technical knowledge of instruments; conveying spirit/mood of music; overall organisation/control/conduct of the rehearsal; personality on the podium.

For the mid-session assessment, space was left to the right of each chosen aspect for the examiner to write a brief comment if this element needed some attention by the student. The mid-session assessment was considered primarily as a tool to assist students with their coursework. For the final assessment space was left to the right of each chosen aspect for the examiner to allocate a mark out of ten, the maximum total being 150.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 16

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Database entry ref: 183

Objective Structured Clinical Examination in Health and Nursing

The objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) is an objective method of assessing students' clinical competence. The subjective elements of clinical performance are screened out by using an agreed checklist of factors for the skill/intervention being practised. The checklist is validated and checked for reliability by a group of clinicians. Written and practical OSCE stations enable the assessment of students' competence in knowledge, clinical decision making, communication and psychomotor skills. Formative and summative OSCEs are carried out in each year of the course.

Students as part of the curriculum have lectures and laboratory sessions on clinical practice. In first year as an introduction to this type of examination lecturers undertake a one-station OSCE and all students have a formative OSCE prior to the summative. The examination room is usually partitioned off into five areas representing the five stations involved. There are usually three practical and two written stations. At each station there is a case study incorporating what students are required to do. An assessor observes the student and notes observations on the checklist. Five minutes are allotted to each station and a timekeeper indicates the end of each time-period. Students rotate round each station.

Feedback sheets are given to each student on all five stations the following day and opportunities given to discuss aspects with a lecturer. This type of examination therefore allows students to identify their own learning needs and have control of their learning.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 140

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Database entry ref: 155

Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Clinical assessments in medicine, by their very nature, have a subjective element to them. This aspect has always been of some interest and so the introduction of an objective structured examination allowed the opportunity to remove the subjectivity as far as possible. Further, a well monitored introduction of the OSCE has allowed comparison of student performance in this component with the other, more traditional, assessment components.

The OSCE involves approximately 200 students per annum in their fourth or fifth year of undergraduate studies. The exams run every eight weeks with 30 or 40 students on each occasion. In essence, the assessment comprises 10 independent "stations" at which various tasks are performed. These could include clinical tasks such as clinical examination, counselling, performing cervical smears (using models) etc or problem solving stations where a clinical scenario is outlined and questions are asked of the candidate. There are also knowledge-based stations where examples of lab reports, pathological specimens or slide photographs are presented and questions asked thereof. The students rotate through the stations in a set order with four minutes allocated for each station.

The overall mark from the OSCE contributes to 50% of the continuous assessment mark which in turn forms one of three independent components of the final professional examination in obstetrics and gynaecology. Comparisons have been possible between student performance in the OSCE overall with the other components of the assessment and further, by analysing the stations by type (that is clinical skill, problem solving or knowledge) it has been possible to compare student performance in different skill type stations with the other components.

This initiative has led to more objectivity in student assessment and also objectivity in the assessment of the examination itself. It is however resource-costly.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [x] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 69

Coursework Assessment

Coursework Assessment in First Year Mathematics

Weekly coursework has been a regular part of the first year courses for many years but, until now, has never been formally assessed; its purpose has been diagnostic only. Formal assessment was restricted to Class Examinations (which once could qualify students for exemption from further examination) and Degree Examinations. Recently one project per term per course was introduced; these contributed 15% to the final assessment. Our concern was that students tend to concentrate on assessed work, which can lead to uneven study patterns; this is further exacerbated by the pressures of major projects or essays in their third subject. Such unevenness is detrimental to the study of a hierarchical subject such as mathematics, where it is essential to keep abreast of the subject matter.

We believe it to be important to inculcate good study patterns at the earliest possible stage, but we fear that a significant number of students would not cooperate with an increase in submitted coursework unless there was a direct reward for doing so. Accordingly, weekly coursework now contributes 25% towards the final assessment in each course. (Class Examinations also contribute 25% and the Degree Examination the remaining 50%.) The work set is carefully chosen to retain the diagnostic role treasured in the past, but the structure also allows the rolling up of a few consecutive weeks' work into a more extended project.

The objective nature of mathematical solutions can make copying and improper collaboration difficult to spot. This has been tackled in two ways. The marking is concentrated in a small number of people, who are able to pool their experience. We have also distributed a "code of practice", explaining the need for students to submit their own work and giving guidelines on collaboration. We reserve the right to ask students suspected of breaking the rules to give an oral presentation of the material to the lecturing staff. Finally, we are experimenting with a new structure of examination paper, designed to reinforce the need to master all topics in the course rather than to rely on "question spotting".

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 200

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Database entry ref: 102

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Applying Theory to Work-Based Problems

The core aim of the MSc course in Change Management is to bring together theory and practice in the context of the student's own work situation. The course is assessed entirely by coursework - there are no examinations - with a wide variety of assessment formats to evaluate different skills. The students are middle managers in public and voluntary organisations, and the part-time course focuses on the new agenda in public and voluntary management. Skills relevant to course participants include synthesis and analysis, information retrieval, report writing, working in groups, presentation and communication, managing information technology. It was decided at a course planning stage to use coursework only in order to test these skills, since examinations had little bearing on them, and since examinations bore little resemblance to the demands of a work situation. A particular concern has been to ensure a balanced portfolio of assignments, reflecting in aggregate the range of management skills that are to be developed and evaluated, together with the sharing of work experience and student analysis thereof through group-work and presentations.

In one particular unit, students work on the design, implementation and analysis of a survey relating to a management issue at work, applying ideas about management and survey method, and learning how to use the SPSS-X computer software in the process. This activity often provides a significant input to management at their workplace, as well as an assessment of coursework. In another unit, students prepare a presentation and report on the application of 'new public management' issues such as consumerism in their workplace, evaluating their effectiveness and analysing the management issues of implementation.

Student feedback has been particularly positive with regard to this initiative, both through the formal channels of student questionnaires, and through informal discussion on individual and group bases.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 25

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Database entry ref: 256

Coursework Assessment With Double-Marking and Early Feedback

In the mid-1980s, we replaced three-hour examinations with assessment by coursework in the course modules of the "Higher Education" programme of our MEd degree. In 1990-91 the same change was made to all other modules within the total MEd programme and there were therefore no more traditional examinations. Our current assessment scheme is, we believe, appropriate to the nature of the MEd programme and to the students, who are practising professionals from a variety of education contexts, with different levels and types of experience.

This plan of assessment has been constantly reviewed and revised. Additional features include blind second-marking and detailed constructive feedback to students, always with the rider that the mark is provisional until after the annual external examiners' meeting. Students submit two copies of each essay so first and second markers can mark simultaneously. This means we are able to provide feedback by two weeks from the submission date, and students can benefit from the feedback during the preparation of their next essays. Having two copies also means that comments can be written on the essays themselves without giving away one marker's view prematurely to the other, and students can have one copy returned to them to keep while the other is retained for external examining.

Most courses are assessed on the basis of a minor and a major essay. The word lengths of these have been altered periodically in response to feedback from students and staff; they are presently 2,500 and 4,000 words respectively. In the few courses assessed by projects, the length of project reports reflects a similar total word length. There is also increasing use of negotiation of essay topics. This enables students to tailor their coursework to their own learning needs and interests. Recently we have begun to discuss the possibility of incorporating an element of self-assessment, but we have not worked out a scheme for this yet.

Start date: mid 1980s

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 80

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Database entry ref: 244

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Coursework Assessment of Second-Year Electrical Engineering Students

Coursework marks (especially for laboratory work) are often combined with examination marks to give the overall mark for summative assessment purposes. A commonly encountered difficulty is that the coursework marks have a higher average and narrower spread than the examination component so that the effective weighting is different from their stated weighting and the significance of the combined mark is unclear. The aims of this initiative were to separate the assessment of coursework from examinations, while retaining an appropriate sanction against students who do not perform satisfactorily, and to improve the educational value of the coursework assignments.

The laboratory report is marked against a checklist of thirteen items, covering presentation, structure and content. A student whose performance is "Unacceptable" for any item, or "Requires Improvement" in four or more, is required to resubmit the work to a satisfactory standard, taking account of the marker's detailed comments, in order to be eligible for the "Certificate of Due Performance" (DP) which an Edinburgh University student must be awarded in order to register for the degree examinations.

As part of this initiative we have also replaced the formal Class Examination by a requirement to submit solutions to Model Examination Questions. These give the students practice in attempting examination style questions and, because they are allowed ample time to do them, using reference material if necessary, it is possible for even the weak student to make a meaningful attempt. As with the laboratory report, unsatisfactory work must be re-submitted, with the benefit of marker's comments, until it is considered adequate. The ultimate sanction is again the DP Certificate.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 90

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Database entry ref: 70

Journal Papers in Strategic Marketing Issues

In a level-4 module on the BA(Hons) Marketing & Communication degree, students are exposed to a range of topical, controversial and downright provocative issues. Lectures provide an analysis of research and practice related to each issue, and invited specialists drawn from the academic and commercial world also contribute to provide a particular perspective or case study illustration. The main objective is to present information, speakers and an environment where students are required to challenge and test conventional wisdom concerning aspects of marketing theory and practice. Stimulating in-depth enquiry and analysis, and generating sound, articulate debate, resulting where practicable in creative and relevant recommendations and resolutions, are desired outcomes. This is considered to be especially appropriate given the ongoing debate among Marketing as we approach the millennium. Consequently, it behoves emerging graduates from this discipline who plan to develop their careers in this field, to address the difficult and often uncomfortable issues currently confronting Marketers.

Students are required to submit firstly a 500 word abstract of a proposed paper on the state of the art prophesies or revelations on any topical marketing issue of their choice.

Abstracts are returned with feedback following which students are required to research and write a full paper (max. 2000 words) to conform to a selected journal specification. From these, a two day residential conference programme is drawn up with each of the students being allocated a 20 minute 'slot' in which to give an oral (and visual) presentation of their paper, invite discussion and respond to questions. The audience comprises their fellow students, lecturers delivering the module and some invited guests (e.g. external speakers and examiners). Marking is apportioned to the paper 70% and the presentation 30%, the latter incorporating an element of peer assessment as well as tutor assessment.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [x] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 30

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Database entry ref: 291

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Structured Reports from Undergraduate Practical Classes

Our Third Year Biochemistry Course has traditionally had a high content of laboratory work ('practical classes') which have been assessed by making each student produce a report on the work carried out in each class. The classes are of variable length and format. Prior to this initiative, the reports produced by students were often rather long and included repetition of much of the detail provided in the practical class handouts, despite the advice given to students on how they should approach the production of their reports. With increased student numbers on the course, this made marking the reports long and tedious.

The new initiative aimed to streamline the marking process while retaining the value of the practical report as a means of assessing students' practical performance. Rather than allowing the student to design their own report format, students are now issued with a 'pro forma' report with spaces for them to complete in specific ways. The format of the pro forma is variable and tailored to each practical, but would typically include spaces for the following types of response (a) answers to specific questions posed during the practical; (b) description of specific aspects of their results; (c) presentation of their data in table, photographic or graph format; (d) reporting overall conclusions; (e) describing any specific problems encountered.

A well-designed pro forma can allow students to present their data in a readily assessable form, clearly indicates to them the amount of detail required in each section to be completed and, together with the practical handout, provides a complete and coherent record of what they have done during the class. This new approach also makes it easier and quicker for the students to summarise their achievements in the class.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 35

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Database entry ref: 160

An Accredited Museums and Galleries Training Scheme

This initiative will allow Honours students in History of Art to gain practical skills and experience within a museum/curatorial environment whilst studying for their degree. The assessment will take the form of a report in which the students will discuss the various stages and problems they encountered, and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.

As a three-credit course option, students will attend a local gallery or similar arts establishment for one day per week where they will be assigned a specific project. Towards the end of their placement they will produce a report on their experience. To complement this experience, a programme of seminars will be given by artists, sculptors and conservators, on materials and methods in their various disciplines. There will also be day visits to museums and conservation centres further afield. This will allow the students to develop a broader appreciation of the handling, care and conservation of artefacts as issues within a museum environment.

This innovation is a move away from the traditional, historically based courses the department offers. Instead it aims to provide preparatory vocational training. In this way the initiative will accommodate the students' needs by meeting their demands for preliminary experience within the field. Furthermore, there will be no examination involved in this assessment. This will benefit those students who do not perform as well under examination conditions.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: 15-20

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Database entry ref: 239

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Double-Loop Assessment of First-Time Submissions

The aim of this initiative is to provide an opportunity for further learning by students during the assignment appraisal process. It is based upon acceptance that the first-time submission is not a one-off event, whereby the student prepares the assignment and the tutor marks it. In this approach, the student receives feedback on the first reading of the assignment and is offered the opportunity to upgrade the first-time submission on one or more occasions, prior to a final mark being posted.

In its application, this approach requires additional input by the tutor, in re-assessing work. This may be limited by a process of requiring that the original submission be handed in along with revised text, which must be highlighted in some manner. Although many students have taken the opportunity to re-submit, a few will not do so and will complain that, in a competitive system, others have had an 'unfair' advantage. A very small number will re-submit work, with minimal revision, and expect an 'automatic' upgrade; being upset or annoyed to find that this is not the case. The majority of students, however, appear to appreciate the opportunity for upgrading marks, and, in so doing, demonstrate improved understanding of the subject area.

Over the period in which the approach has been used, the feedback process has been seen to be of prime importance. This year, a standard format has been adopted. It is based on an example demonstrated by the Centre for Academic Practice, in which written feedback is summarised under three categories -- interpretation, knowledge and organisation -- together with a summary of action for development.

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 60-90

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Database entry ref: 199

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Clinical Legal Skills

Clinical Legal Skills at Level 3 is designed to introduce students to a range of practitioner skills in legal writing and document drafting, client counselling, negotiation, and legal research. Although divided into these four separate units for ease of teaching and learning, a key innovation is the extent to which the module is conceived of and delivered as a thematic whole. Thus, in the legal writing unit the students learn how to operate a rudimentary letter style-bank based on a pre-court reparations negotiation project during which students use the style-bank as well as their legal drafting skills. Where possible I have tried to draw from the students' own experiences (e.g. their use of different forms of writing) or those experiences they are just about to have (e.g. writing covering letter to CVs) in order to explain and illustrate the varieties of legal genres and contexts they are learning.

The module draws upon different media - paper, videotape, computerised style-banks, electronic mail, online and CD-ROM bibliographical resources. These are used not only for teaching and learning but also for assessment, as follows:

- Legal writing and document drafting. Three-hour open book take-away examination. (25%)
- Client counselling. Students submit what they consider to be the best of their videotaped interviews, together with a 1,000-word self-assessment report. (25%)
- Negotiation. A simulated negotiation on email, two students acting for the pursuer, two for the defender. Each team has to use the style bank, research the law on damages, but meet face-to-face once only, for a meeting which is audio- or video-taped. (25%)
- Self-assessment. A 1500-word self-assessment report, based on a learning log filled in at the end of each class. Students have to appraise what they have learned from the module and how this learning transfers to other modules. (25%)

Start date: Spring 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 50

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Database entry ref: 178

Assessment of Learning Contracts in Palliative Care

This is a module that attracts very experienced nurses, caring for patients in a variety of settings who have cancer. This type of assessment draws on knowledge through research and practice and is applied to the nurses' own settings.

Its use of a learning contract is similar to other such contracts. Long-range goals are set, there are specific objectives and learning outcomes; there are specific learning activities, resources and particular responsibilities assigned to the lecturer or mentor, including those of evaluation. In order to demonstrate that the objectives of the learning contract have been achieved, each student is required to select two different methods of assessment from four options:

- Analysis of a critical incident;
- Peer/patient education plan;
- Case study analysis; and
- Protocol/standard for assessment and management of a clinical emergency.

Discussion with lecturers on the setting of appropriate learning objectives is essential, and criteria issued to students at the commencement of the module on each of these options permits mature students to make informed choices. Within the learning contracts, each student negotiates the dates on which each of the two assignments will be submitted as the summative assignment.

Start date: Autumn 1994

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 15

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Database entry ref: 154

Mechanical Engineering Peer Marking Initiative

The teaching of the mechanical engineering sciences relies primarily on three main subject areas: thermofluid mechanics, structural mechanics and dynamics. The understanding of these subjects has traditionally relied on the student continuously working on tutorial questions supplied by the academic teaching staff. However, students on the whole have been spending less time, and working discontinuously, on the tutorial exercises, to the detriment of examination performance. In an attempt to overcome this problem, formal homework exercises have been introduced throughout the main teaching semesters combined with an assessment method that uses peer marking to reduce the load on academic staff.

The initiative has been implemented into three first year classes, each with approximately 240 students. Due to the large number of students and the associated administration and staff loading difficulties, each student attempts 6 questions in total and is timetabled to appear at a peer marking session with their solutions every three weeks. The homework exercises contribute 10% of the overall class assessment.

During the peer marking session, academic staff present the model solution and the marking scheme. The students' solutions are redistributed amongst the student body of the class before marking commences. At the end of the marking process the marked solutions are recovered by the academic staff for recording and sample checking of the peer marking. The marked solutions are returned to the student at the next tutorial session.

The exercises allow the students' performance to be assessed throughout the teaching periods and attempts to encourage the student to study continuously. Students are able also to identify problem areas in their studying and to appreciate typical assessment techniques and more structured approaches to presenting solutions to questions.

Start date: Autumn 1995

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 240

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Database entry ref: 290

Mini-Projects: An Introduction to Planning Laboratory Work

Instead of normal practical sessions, third year Biological Science students are asked to devise their own 'mini-project', working in groups of two or three. They are provided with examples of possible techniques or procedures they might use but the actual mini-project, which must be original, is of their own devising. Apart from an initial introduction there are four three-hour sessions at fortnightly intervals. The first of these is usually spent in choosing, discussing and writing out the suggested plan of work. This must be discussed with the lecturer who will probably suggest changes. Sometimes the scheme must be approved by the COSHH officer also and the cost has to be considered.

This is a considerable change of approach for students who have, until this point, largely followed a 'cookery book' system. It shows them that each stage of a laboratory procedure must be planned and tested and only by analysing these tests can a final experiment be designed.

As most of the experiments involve human volunteers it introduces the concept of good clinical practice i.e. a rigorous consideration of what is proposed must be made to ensure that it is as safe as possible and the volunteers must know what is proposed and what the implications are - they must be warned not to participate if they suffer from certain illnesses. It also introduces students to the difficulties of organising volunteer attendance and of organising their own work-schedule to fit in with volunteer availability.

The final presentation of their results gives them valuable experience at working together, drawing on the skills of each member to make the best of the material they have generated. Given the students' inexperience and the limited time available, it is rare for any mini-project to generate results which are significant or dependable, but it provides valuable experience in their careers when they graduate.

Start date: Autumn 1991

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [ ] the department
- [ ] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 40-50

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Database entry ref: 111

Assessment of Skills and Competence on Legal Placements

The School of Law sought to broaden student experience by enabling students to gain academic credit for non-coursework, which contributed to their legal education. Credit-worthy activities have included work with voluntary agencies, e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Maryhill Tribunal Representation Unit, Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, Enable and Law Centres. Individual student projects involving research may also qualify; for example, one student recently organised an environmental law inquiry into a local planning decision. Credit may also be awarded for mooting, including participation in international moots.

The activity is accredited by making an application to a Committee, consisting of four academic members of the School of Law, and two external members, one a solicitor. Applications from students must contain a proposal in the form of a "learning contract", outlining the kind of work, how many hours are involved, what kind of supervision is available. This will be the basis of a three-way agreement between the placement, the student and the School of Law. It is not necessary in the case of mooting.

Students are assessed by a combination of external and self-assessment, including:

- A standard log book, recording work done, including problems encountered and how they were tackled.
- The learning contract.
- A reflective statement (500-1,000 words), on the contribution of the placement to the student's understanding of the law.
- A grid-type questionnaire about skills and competencies achieved - one of these is submitted by the Placement Manager, another is a self-assessment by the student.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: c.40

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Database entry ref: 242

Assessment Scheme for Problem-Based Learning Projects

A programme of Problem-Based Learning Projects (PBLPs) is run for Phase I, Year I Medical students. Its aim is to develop small-group problem-based learning with the emphasis on self-directed learning. It is part of the Phase I Clinical Correlation Course, which involves vertical integration between pre-clinical learning and teaching of clinical medicine. Over 14 weeks, students in groups of eight investigate a problem area in medicine, guided by a tutor from a clinical unit. Format and content of projects is flexible at the discretion of students and tutors. Projects culminate in a Presentation Day - students present the outcome of their project to their peers, tutors, and other guests, using oral presentation, posters, role-playing, video, etc.

The assessment scheme involves three principal elements:

(a) Groups are asked to keep a collective project diary, sharing the work involved, and to submit this to the tutor, who takes it into account in his or her overall assessment of the group

(b) Evaluation of the project presentations, to allow feedback to the group and to the tutor. However, this does not form part of the formal assessment process

(c) Continuous assessment of project work by the tutor, which comprises the principal basis of assessment and involves the use of a criterion-based assessment sheet. The design of this instrument has evolved through discussions with the tutors and student representatives. The criteria being assessed are made explicit to students and tutors before the start of the course, including showing the form to the entire class at an introductory session with the course organiser. Subsequent analysis of the marks awarded revealed a very high median mark (18/20), with a range of 10-20.

Start date: Autumn 1992

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 210

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Database entry ref: 8

A Business Skills Programme

This programme is part of the BA in Business & Management. Unlike mainstream Business Studies courses, though, from the outset the design of the course has proceeded from the view that management is a team game rather than one we play alone; and that knowledge of management is of most use if and when it is used and applied.

Given these two axioms, much of the work students do from the first year onwards is done in groups, and as much as possible is done outwith the institution. In earlier years we do this in a restricted way - undertaking behavioural exercises with friends and work colleagues, and completing a feasibility study. This dimension of the degree peaks in Degree and Honours years. Students in these years are organised in groups (one Honours student and two or three Degree Year students) to undertake a project in a local organisation (churches, GP practices, hospitals, shops, as well as 'conventional businesses') on a management project nominated by the company. They are assessed firstly on the project itself, by means of a client report and a report on the progress of the project; and secondly, on the behavioural skills deployed.

Degree-year students are assessed 60% on the former; Honours students are assessed 60% on the latter. While the former poses few significant problems in terms of assessment, the latter has proved more problematic. However, by getting students to keep diaries - and thus be more reflexive - as well as meeting students and the company regularly, the problems have been reduced, if not fully resolved.

This course is very popular with students - they feel they are really achieving a great deal.

Start date: Autumn 1991

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- ☐ across a course
- ☑ across a degree
- ☐ across the institution
- ☐ in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- ☐ the department
- ☐ the institution
- ☐ other institutions

No. of students affected: c. 300

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A Student-Designed Project at Second Level

The aim of this initiative was to influence the nature of student learning and encourage students to achieve one of the course aims; namely, developing their own interests in interrogating the Homeric epics and putting into practice the academic skills they had been learning in formulating and answering questions.

The initiative involves all students on the Arts second level, half-crediting (thirty CATS points) course, which has as its course material the two Homeric epic poems. Four assignments are due on this course, though students can claim substitution on one of these. The final assignment is a slightly longer essay than the usual (2000 words) on a topic of their own choosing. The penultimate assignment is a plan of this essay, with sufficient detail to enable the tutor to understand the flow of the argument, the nature of material used to support the argument, the bibliography used, etc. Preparation of this assignment is made through one of the course units, A Learning Guide, which talks students through the various decision points in choosing a project title. They are also allocated time with their tutor for discussion before the penultimate assignment (to get redirection if needed at a reasonably early stage) and they are asked to consider what the features of a good essay are, and to report on how their plan for the project essay is matching up against these criteria. Then, at the end of their actual project essay, they report on how successful they have been in practice in meeting the criteria; whether they followed their initial plan, or whether they changed it - and why.

This initiative has produced an exciting and remarkable range of topics. But students still find it difficult to stand back and look dispassionately at their own work, and to gather the data and set criteria which would enable them to make reasoned judgement. I and other tutors have therefore introduced informal self-assessment sheets for the first two TMAs, to help develop a culture of self-appraisal. But I feel, especially with distance students who are working in isolation, we need to begin to establish this culture right from the moment of entry to the University.

Start date: Autumn 1993

Impact:

The initiative was introduced:

- [x] across a course
- [ ] across a degree
- [ ] across the institution
- [ ] in collaboration with other institutions

The initiative has been adopted by:

- [x] the department
- [x] the institution
- [ ] other institutions

No. of students affected: 500

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The ASSHE Inventory presents over 120 accounts of recent changes in the ways in which students are assessed in Scotland's universities and colleges. The ASSHE Inventory will therefore be of great interest to all those, in Scotland and elsewhere, concerned with curricula, teaching and learning, and assessment in higher education.

The entries in the Inventory are drawn from a much larger database developed as part of the ASSHE Project on Assessment Strategies in Scottish Higher Education. The project was carried out by a joint University of Edinburgh/ Napier University, Edinburgh project team, under the auspices of the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals and with the financial support of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council.

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